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ABSTRACT

This oral history project was completed by a Munice, Indiana high school honors U.S. history class. The students interviewed Munice residents, who during World War II either served in the military or experienced the War from the homefront. Two interview instruments were designed, one for the military front and the other for the home front. The students interviewed 23 participants using a video camera in order to record the total interview. Written transcripts were prepared from the videos and are included. The interview instruments are provided as appendices. (DB)

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THE WAY IT WAS:
MUNCIE IN WORLD WAR II

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MUNCIE SOUTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface i

MILITARY INTERVIEWS

David Baker 2
Earl Carpenter 6
Jim Carey 11
Edward Case 19
Fletcher Dickey 23
Rollin Gill 25
Howard Miller 29
Buddy Quire 36
Charles Vester 43
"Dutch" Vonderschmidt 49
Milton Wallace 53

HOME FRONT INTERVIEWS

Naomi Atterson 58
Dorothy Bailey 62
Jim Bailey 68
Kathryn Carpenter 73
Joyce Case 76
Crystal Irene Jordan Grubbs 80
Ruth Lafferty 85
Lena Jane Lawson 91
Maxine Owens 95
Walt Robinson 100
Doris Faulkner Stewart 106
Wayne Watman 112

APPENDICES

Participant Letter 122
Release Form 123
Interview Sheet - Military 124
Interview Sheet - Home Front 125
Interview Log Sheet 126
Bibliography 127

PREFACE

World War 2 was an exciting and apocalyptic event of twentieth century United States History. The participants both from the military aspect as well as from the home front are now in their sixties and seventies. This oral history project is an attempt to preserve a small segment of that historical period as viewed through the eyes and experiences of those participants from Muncie, Indiana. Capturing the experiences of these people on videotape is essential because in a very short period of time, they will be forever gone from our midst. If historians do not document just a small portion of this unique generation's collective memory of World War 2, it will be forever lost.

"The Way It Was: Muncie in World War II" is an oral history project by Dr. Carl Siler's honors United States History Class at Muncie Southside High School in Muncie, Indiana during the 1990-1991 school year. The project was funded by a grant from the Indiana Department of Education. An oral history project utilizing local history is an exciting method of allowing students to "experience" history first hand thereby making history class a more valuable experience and places local history within the overall perspective of United States History. Oral history adds to the collective knowledge of local and national history because it documents citizen's participation in important aspects of World War 2.

The students designed the two interview instruments: the military and the home front. Students selected people to interview and interviewed them using a video camera so as to record the total interview. Written transcripts were then composed from the tapes into a readable format.

The videotapes will be donated to the Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie, Indiana to be stored in their archives for possible use by other researchers. Copies of the finished book will be donated to local school and public libraries, Ball State University Library, Minnetrista Cultural Center Library, Indiana State Library, and the Library of Congress.

I wish to personally thank the members of the class for their involvement and dedication to this project: Jelani Eddington, Steve Flanagan, Missy Kramer, Matt Miller, Ben Stettler, Tammy Stoneburner, and Dan Warner. Also deserving a thank you are Mr. Jim Bailey for his audio-visual expertise; Ms. Mary Fortney, Social Studies Consultant of the Indiana Department of Education for her guidance; and Dr. Sam Abram and the Muncie Community Schools for the system's help by allowing students to undertake such a worthwhile project and learning experience.

Hopefully other classes and students will undertake this type of project because if the voices of past participants are not captured on videotape, a vast and cumulative abundance of historical knowledge will be forever lost. History is the cumulative remembrances and experiences of millions of "common" Americans, and students of this generation need to understand that the collective nature of these human experiences is truly the essence of American History.

Dr. Carl R. Siler
June, 1991

MILITARY INTERVIEWS

David Baker was age 21 during World War 2 and served in the U.S. Army.

Which branch of the service were you in?

"I was in the Army...uh...five years, a little over 5 years."

What was your rank?

"I was a T5. Same as a corporal. I was in the infantry as a corporal then when I went into Panama I was a T5."

So your job in the war was in the infantry?

"Well, I was in the infantry when they declared war, which was on December 7th, 1941, uh that was on a Sunday. I remember just like it was yesterday. The next day they put us all on alert. I didn't know how soon they was gonna send us, but eventually they transferred me from the infantry and I went into the 151st which they filled up with all the extra people that they needed to fill up for a full troop. Then we had 'Hurry up and wait', 'cause we didn't know how soon they was gonna send us. We left from New Orleans; it took us three days on a zig zag course to Panama and uh, that was where I started as a T5 in the dispensary. Anti-aircraft is what it was...an anti-aircraft battery and that was right ont he canal and I watched hundreds and hundreds of troops as they pass through that canal 'cause that was the only way; the shortest way they had to get to any place where they was going to fight. Like the...uh...island, they had to go through the Panama, otherwise they'd have to go clear around South America, which was...but the Japanese already had detailed drawings of that Panama Canal and I wonder why they ever, why they didn't really cripple us worse than they did because they had everything drawn out, but they had shown 'em everything that we had. When they did hit Pearl Harbor, it's a wonder they didn't come right on over and take us over."

So during the whole war you were stationed in Panama?

"Well, I was stationed there for...uh... 27 months. Then they sent me back to the States and, uh, I was in the...come back to Camp Kilmer, then they sent me all the way across to Camp Barkley, Texas, and I served time out there. I was in a what they called a cadry, or a training group. Then, I found out that I was gonna be shipped out. So I came back; called Betty, my wife, and uh, I rode back on...I always called it a cattle train, 'cause that's about what it was. And uh, I came back to Muncie and was married and had a short length of time at home. And then after that I had to go to Indian Town Gap, Pennsylvania, which was a place where they were sending the group that they were gonna send overseas again. So I stayed there for...it wasn't very long. I don't remember exactly how long it was now, but my wife came up to see me and some of things that...it wasn't very long before she had to go back home and they shipped me across to San Diego, California. And from there I went about half way around the world, went to Australia and on around to India, which was my next assignment. I was put in the 18th field hospital and that was quite an experience. When you're in India, it's an altogether different life than you've ever seen before 'cause people are very unusual people...when they employed the people in India to work, they would just take a boxcar and cut the side off it and then hinge one end of it. Then when they got ready to put people in for the work detail, they just put as many in there as they could, shoved the door shut; pull the next car up and load it up and then when they got to the work area, they just opened the door and the people would just fall out. I don't know how many were injured in the time that they had 'em like that. That was one of the interesting things that I saw while I was there. And an interesting thing in India is that the cattle is sacred as you probably have already heard. They just wander around the town, they wander in the houses, right out and back again and right into the street. There's no cleanliness at all...it's just really a disastrous place because there's no sanitation at all."

Were you ever involved in battle?

"No, I wasn't in battle. I was on a search light position when I was in Panama. That was a rather interesting thing because you could see that search light for many, many miles whenever they'd light up that search light to go across that area there; the water. Then we were out away from the main coast and we had to go out in a little motorboat. We'd take our supplies out there then we would come back into the post, the fella that brought us in would usually go back to the other post and then when we would wanna go back we'd have to pick up the telephone at the dock and call him up and he'd come and pick us up."

8

Can you describe the ways that all the different jobs you did helped the war?

"We took care of a lot of immunizations in Panama, 'cause we were the main detachment, and we took care of all the sick leave and if we sent 'em to the hospital, we sent 'em to another coast. I've given a number of innoculations. Men walk in the door and we give 'em a shot and they start out the door, they hit the door and I've had a lot of 'em faint on me. Really it's not that bad, but some people it affects that way. The barracks was right on the water. We could walk probably from here to the end of this room (20-25 feet) and we were right on the water. We did a lot of swimming in the water around the barracks there."

So what do you remember most about World War 2?

"Well, it was interesting to be in Panama. I learned a lot of things; when they were battling for Panama just recently in the last few years, I knew when they talked about some of these places, I knew just where they were and how it looked and everything. It was a nice climate. I walked many a time from the barrack. I was a mail carrier. I picked up the mail and brought it back to the barracks. So many times I walked over there I'd be soppin' wet by the time I'd get there and by the time I'd get back to the barracks my clothes would be dry. There was that much difference in the heat of the place. It was always warm."

So what would you say is the most rewarding of your time in Panama?

"Well, I would say that possibly that I was in a place which was really very important because without the Panama Canal Zone, they would've had to go way clear around South America to get through the Pacific Ocean, which they were hoping to get there as quick as they could, and that Panama Canal Zone, it was really a very important part of the war because without that they would've been delayed a lot of times in sending troops over to the battle fields. They were fighting in the islands at that time."

At that time, what did you think you were fighting for?

"Well, we knew we were fighting against Hitler. And we knew that we were fighting against something wrong and Hitler was surely wrong all the way. There was people that didn't know that the man was as mean as, well, he led people to believe things that weren't true at all. When we were in Germany this last spring, we got to go to some of the places where Hitler had started out in the beer halls there. It was interesting to see how he had gotten up on the tables there and had brought all those men and people in and how he had, I would say, talked 'em into things that weren't true at all. They were hungry and he was givin' 'em food and they followed him because that was one of the things they were needing, was food. But he was leading them right down, [the people], from the time it started."

What did you feel when you heard that the war was over?

"Oh, that was the happiest day of my life...Ha Ha Ha! I had only a few days...I think they allowed us three months and I had been in long enough and when that time came I wasn't long in trying to get back to the States."

Did war experiences change your life?

"Oh, yes, they're bound to. Because we had planned, my wife and I had planned to be married and I thought I'd be out. Twenty-eight months was all I was supposed to serve and I had most of that in. I thought, "Well, it won't be too long." It ended up five years and so many months, I forget exactly the days. It was interesting, but I wouldn't wanna go through all of it again."

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

"Well, one of the groups I took care of was called 'Merrill's Marauders'. That was the group of what I suppose you might call men that were trained and were willing to go into places and fight where most of the other fellas wouldn't go. I thought they was gonna send us up into China and I sent home to my father-in-law at that time, he's passed on now, but I told him I was going up into China and I would like to have a knife made in case I should have to use it. I never did use it, but I still have it. He took a Nicholson file and made a knife blade out of it and it was just like a razor. I carried that...well, at least that would be some protection if I should get into a place where I had to protect myself. I never did go, though."

Earl Carpenter was 26 when he entered the Army in 1942. He is a retired auto worker in Muncie, Indiana.

In what branch of the service did you serve?

"I was in the 94th Infantry Division."

How long were you there?

"I was in the 94th nine days short of three years and was overseas 15 months during the Battle of the Bulge."

What was your rank?

"At one time I was a sergeant, most of the time I was a PFC."

What was your job during the war?

"Well, I had different jobs. At one time I was in the rifle platoon. I was a squad leader and in Tennessee on maneuvers, and became a PFC. I went into the weapons platoon. The reason being was that they were sending so many replacements overseas that I was put into the weapons platoon as an ammunition bearer and a 30 caliber machine gun."

Could you describe what Tennessee maneuvers were?

"Well, that was preparing for combat. We had to cross the rivers and streams preparing to go overseas."

Where were you stationed overseas?

"Well, I was in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, and all up through the Battle of the Bulge."

Could you define the Battle of the Bulge?

"It was when Von Rundstedt tried to overrun us after we'd taken quite a few towns in Germany. Where they started an offensive, to come through and that's why they called it the Battle of the Bulge, because there was quite a few divisions in the battle of the Battle of the Bulge thing."

Where were you during the Battle of the Bulge?

"Well, that was in Belgium and all the way to the Rhine River where we fought."

So, you were in battle, what affects did it have on your life?

"As Roosevelt said, it's heck to have war, and it had a really bad affect on everybody. It was lying in the snow and digging ditches, foxholes and different things. Especially one time after we pushed the Germans into the woods. That evening we had to dig in and dig a foxhole. One thing came to mind. I thought....it was late in the evening....and I was too worn out to dig a foxhole. Then it came to me, what a colonel said to me back in the states, "Over here we're going to dig foxholes, when you get over there it'll be up to you whether or not you dig or not because it will be your life you're going to stand for." So then it came back to me, and I went ahead and dug it. But, the next morning they started throwing shells, so I dug my hole pretty deep. So I had me a little parapet dug and was sitting, when a piece of shrapnel came down into my hole. I came close to gettin' it that particular time."

Were you ever injured in battle?

"No, I wasn't, but I saw a lot of my friends and buddies that were wounded pretty bad and some of 'em got killed."

What did that make you think?

"Well, you didn't hardly have time to think about that because you were always pushing ahead and hoping that maybe the battle would be over. It just seemed like it was an eternity before it finally did end."

Because you were pushing all the time, did you ever feel like a puppet?

"Well, like I said, you didn't have much time to think because you could hear snipers on your left and on your right and you'd ask your commanders who was firin' and they didn't seem to know anymore that the rest of us. I guess that's the reason we won, 'cause we kept pushin' ahead and overpowered 'em."

What do you remember most about the war?

"Well, really your buddies gettin' killed was the most that you had to worry about and of course trying to protect yourself. But with your friends gettin' killed and replacements gettin' in all the time, it was horrible."

Were there any rewarding experiences?

"Well, yeah, every time you took a town, you thought maybe this time was the end of it, but like I said, it didn't seem like there was any end to it until it was over."

When you were fighting, what did you think you were fighting for?

"Well, it's a little hard to say. Really, to save the American soil, that's really what we went over there for...for your own family and everyone else. To keep them from coming over here, that's why we were over there."

After 50 years, do you still feel the same way?

"Yeah, I think it's kinda foolish to have wars. They don't seem to accomplish anything. Looking at Japan and Germany, seems like they're gonna be better off than we are. We're in more debt than was ever known, and it seems like wars don't accomplish anything. I just can't see havin' any wars. I think we oughta try to accomplish things besides going to war."

What were your feelings when you heard the war was over?

"Well, that's hard to describe. It was a real good feeling. Like I say, I didn't think there was gonna be any end to it, then when it was over, it was hard to comprehend, you couldn't hardly believe it."

What about when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

"You wanna know where I was? We were at the Rivoli Theater when Pearl Harbor was bombed and we got up and left the theater because it was such a shock to us that we got up and left the theater and didn't see all the picture. It was really something to think about because we'd never had any war during our time, so it was quite a shock."

Can you describe what ways your war experience changed your life?

Well, being in the service was quite an experience. You learn to live with other people and you've got to get along with each other because you've got to protect each other's lives and do it gives you a better feeling for your fellow man if you're in the service during the war."

Where were you during Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

"We were in Germany before we went into Czechoslovakia and it was after that we moved into Czechoslovakia to get ready to go over to Japan, it ended before we got there."

In the Battle of the Bulge, were you in the Malmady or St. Vith area?

"We were close to Bastogne. About all divisions were up through there. I don't know exactly how many miles. We weren't too far away."

Was your unit with Patton's 3rd Army and did you get to see Patton?

"Yes, I did. It was quite an experience. We were in Czechoslovakia when we got to see Patton. He was gonna give us a speech. We waited an hour and a half on him and finally we heard the siren on the command car. He had his secretary with him and of course all of the generals, lieutenants, and captains were saluting him. They had a platform built. He got up on the second step, put his hands on his pearl-handled pistols, let out a cuss word and said, "Okay you guys, go ahead and take all the pictures you want." After they got all the pictures they wanted, he went over to the podium and made a speech. He said, "This is twice we've come over here and whipped these S.O.B.'s," and he said, "There's enough of you men now to go back home and run that country so we won't have no more wars and we won't have to come back over here." And I never will forget that. He was quite a man."

Is there anything else you want to say?

"Well, my son was born after I was overseas and that was quite a thing. We were down in a basement in this German town and out in front of us was the "Sigfried Line". And they had three ribbons, one on the left, one up on the center of the hill, and one up on the right. We had look-outs up in this building and they could look out and watch these Germans come out of those pillboxes going from one to the other. So I was up there one day and I was looking through the binoculars and it must have been about eight Germans goin' from one pillbox to another, so I hollered back to this guy and he laid in a barrage. I don't know how many they got but then the door of the pillbox opened. They came out with stretchers and picked up the bodies."

Jim Carey joined the U.S. Navy during World War 2. After the war, he served as sheriff for Delaware County and on the city police force. He is currently the Mayor of Muncie.

How old were you during World War 2?

"When World War 2 broke out I'd have been a young, tender lad, I presume of around 13 or 14 in Muncie, Indiana. I'll never forget that day because I was with another retired fireman in the city and we were in Elisia Grand Theater. When young people 13 or 14 years old come and tell ya that Pearl Harbor has been bombed, it's kind of a gutsy feelin' -- of course you're not old enough to understand. On the other hand, as time went on from then, it became a very disastrous war in the matter of lives of the American people and for our country."

Which branch of the service did you serve in?

"I served in the U.S. Navy for approximately two years. I quit Muncie Central High School in 1944. I had a senior year to go. It was during the summer. My mother died when I was ten years old and I had quite a time adjusting. My father was working at the post office. I went to him and told him -- it was across from the old Central High School -- I said that it was time for me to change my lifestyle and go to the service, which a lot of young people were doing at the time. So I left Central High School in '44 and returned in the fall of '46."

What was your rank?

"I was a Seaman First Class on various kinds of ships. I was on destroyers, repair ships, and on one cruiser, or battleship for a while -- I forget which -- but I think that all the Navy ships were a great experience for me. Especially at that young age when you're sometimes far away from home.....the farthest away was in 1945. I was probably 15,000 miles away from Muncie, Indiana in Sing Tau, China, which was in September and October of 1945. I was about 15,000 miles from Muncie, Indiana and about 200 miles south of what's now Peking or Bejing, China. So you have strange thoughts being that far away from home at that age when you should be home playing football or basketball for Central High School."

What was your specific job in the Navy?

"I was what you call in the engineering force. We were below decks and we worked in where the boilers are. That's where you get speed and generated steam forward to propel the propellers. It was very interesting work. It was a very dark and lonely place to be, in case of you were hit with a shell below deck, but it was very interesting to me. Things I'd never thought to be done, I have memories of today."

Were you involved in the battle?

"No, I wasn't involved in any battles, per say. The ships that I was on had been in battles before I was on them. But when I got on board the various ships, the war was winding down and we weren't in any more battles."

The battles before your participation, did they affect your opinion of entering the war?

"Well, yes. When you look at battles like that on the ships that I served on, that had many casualties, both in deaths and injuries, kamikaze planes and things like that, it gives you alot of thought. A lot of those people I didn't know 'cause I wasn't on the ships at that time. One day you're working with people and the next day you're talking to people about people that did the job I was doing, but aren't anymore through death. Especially, again, I keep reminiscing about the age factor and that's where I grew up."

You mentioned being stationed in many places during the year, what were the main cities?

"I went to....the first thing I did was go to Great Lakes Naval Training Station. I was there for eight weeks of boot camp. From there, I went to electric-engineering school for another six weeks at Great Lakes. From there I went to the west coast and went aboard ship and went directly to the South Pacific. I think again, looking back and reflecting, that when you go to school in the U.S. Navy and they have first class training and where you can advance, we had the best equipment to fight the war. It was just a matter of how much time it took before we would overcome the Japanese."

Can you describe the ways in which your job contributed to the war effort?

"Well, I think that anyone that was in the armed services, whether they stayed in the U.S. or went overseas; I think everyone that was in the military, both men and women, contributed to the fact that the war came to a conclusion....I believe in September of '45. I think that's what was important no matter what you did. Just like our operation today of Desert Shield. There are still a lot of people in the U.S. working at various parts of bases and things and like that, and there are alot of people in the Far East. So, all those things work hand-in-hand. Everybody does a job to make a complete victory."

You said you felt everyone contributed. Do you feel that perhaps the infantry contributed more?

"Well, of course I think, there'd be some to an extent more than others. In the Navy, of course, there's jokes of the Navy never seeing battle on land. Navy peoples a proud service, but of course, the infantry was front-line troops. Then again, without a Navy we could never have gotten them overseas to the various islands; Guagalimi, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Guam. Things like that, if it hadn't been for the Navy for transporting those kind of people. I think every service had a brother that served in the Coast Guard. People used to think the Coast Guard didn't go over three or four miles away from the coast, but he was in the South Pacific and many engagements. So the Coast Guard was involved as much as the infantry, but of course, the infantry was in to the combat and without a doubt, with the most losses. Marines and Army....these things are very tragic, and that's one of the fallacies when you have a war."

Can you describe what you remember most about the war?

"I think the thing I remember most about it, for me personally, is as I state before. I quit school and I didn't know which direction I was taking. Being away from home for the very first time. Without error, being 15,000 miles from home, I think that it helped me grow up. Before I thought life was just something to come and go, but when you're in school as a young person, I was without discipline. The first day I was in the Navy I decided I wasn't going to be an Admiral. It got my attention....the armed services helped me grow up, believe me, immensely."

What do you feel was your most rewarding experience in the war?

"I think the experience that I had outside the combat area, was just seeing places and being places that I'll probably never see again. I fought over in China. Hong Kong, Shang Hai, Sing Tau -- those kinda things are the things you remember. Through the Panama Canal, and Australia, the Philippines, and places that now, 50 years later, you look and see the progress they have made in their country such as we've made too. The kinda things that were very interesting to me as a young man....to ride a rickshaw. Those are the kind of things you remember, the fellowship, the people that were on your ships. You became very close. We had 400 people on one of our ships and we probably knew half of them by their first names because you're with each other every day eating and doing all of the gunnery exercises and everything else that comes with being a service man. So it was just an overall amazing thing as I look back now to spend the time in the service that I did."

Do you think you'd like to go back and visit the countries again to see how they've changed?

"Well, I think that's true and I have....was recalled in 1950 for two years back to Korea. I did have the opportunity to return to Korea on two different occasions in the past five years and see the changes there. I was back to Taiwan, which was for mostly in 1945 and I've been to Taiwan twice. So you can see what these countries are doing. The innovative things they're doing with their economy, education, and it is good to go back to these places. You can see things you've seen and look at the amount of changes. You couldn't believe that for most of it....Taiwan, with all the modern updated techniques that we have here in our own country."

At the time of the war, what did you think you were fighting for?

"Well, I think...it wasn't like Vietnam....it wasn't really like the Korean War, which I was recalled to, that was a police action. It's not like what they're doing in Desert Shield today. It's not......World War 2 was...was...I don't want to use the word "popular" war, but it was a war where everybody felt the Japanese attacked our country and we needed to do something about it. It was very strong feelings. You didn't...you'd have very few deserters or conscientious objectors that didn't want to go in for the fear of killing.

The lines were long at enlistments. I had to wait a week or two before I could get into the Navy, because they had all their boot camps full. So it was something that was in your heart. Your country was in trouble and you wanted to be involved; be a part of it. Not a part of a problem, but a solution."

After 50 years, do you still feel the same way?

"Yes, I haven't changed a bit. I think that our country...I am..amiss that we have had a Vietnam. I lost a young nephew in Vietnam. I lost several classmates in Korea that were with me at Central High School. Also, we look at this Desert Shield program now. These things are probably things that shouldn't happen, but if they don't happen, what's to believe in the American Flag and the honor of our country? In fact, I'm very committed to that."

What were your feelings when you heard that World War 2 was over?

"Well, I was excited, again I was a long way from home when it ended. It would have been right about where Iwo Jima is located now. I hadn't been there a very long time and I thought I'd finally get home. Well, of course, I was young and I didn't have the points you could get out of the armed services with at that time. I did stay on ship and I went from September, 1945 to April, 1946 till I was discharged and I came home, so it was just good to get home."

How many points did it take to get discharged?

"Well, that's a long time back, I think it took 36 points. If you were married, you started out with 10 points. I wasn't married, so that kept ya for two, three, or four more months. It was a fair way. People had been over there since 1941. People that were in the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard; the largest part of the time had families and needed to get out and go home. I was a young person and I felt very comfortable with that and when April of '46 came around I was very, very happy to come back to Muncie, Indiana."

You mentioned that the war made you mature. Are there any other ways that you recall that the war affected you?

"Well, I think that's the main thing, of course, I keep remembering back to that, but the war was hard on a lot of people. I had a very good classmate that had gone to Muncie Central that had played on the Bearcat basketball team, who was the very same age, and he was killed when he was 18 in Iwo Jima. When you have those kind of losses....and other classmates. World War 2 was just kind of a sad situation. It was good to get it over with, but it was sad that it had to happen. But I think it pointed out one thing, that the U.S. is probably without a doubt, one of the strongest countries in the world. And we believe in principle, and we believe in peace and without peace you sometimes have conflict. Just like what we're going through in the Far East right now."

Do you have any other remembrances?

"Well, I think again in conclusion, that it seems almost like it didn't happen. When I look back in time I would like to have stayed and finished high school, but I don't regret it and I don't regret being in the Navy and I don't regret being in the places I've been. It was a great experience for me. Fortunately, I wasn't in much combat. I think it helped me as a person to understand why we do these things and why war comes along. We know how to get in and get it over with and let our country get back to what it was doing...being the greatest country in the world."

Were you ever involved in a typhoon while on board one of your ships?

"Yes, we came close to a typhoon; there was a typhoon off of Okinawa. We arrived there a day or two after it was over, but we lost several ships....beached. In those kinds of waters there that was the only time it was close. In the South Pacific you do have a lot of time that -- aboard ship, of course a small ship like a destroyer -- that you go two or three days and you don't eat. There's 300 people on that ship and when the bow goes under, the screws come out of the back of it and it spins and vibrates the whole ship. You can run into some good strong weather there where its hard to get into the dining room. Overall, it was a great, great experience."

Did you ever get a chance to go on to any of the islands like Iwo Jima or Taiwan, or Okinawa?

"Yes, I went on Guam. We stopped there and we had what's called "R and R"....rest and recreation. You could see where the battles had been and a lot of the things were still standing. In China and Furmosa, we were on land there quite a bit. You could see what things had been going on in that country."

Did you ever get a chance to go to Japan after the war?

"Yes, well, it wasn't directly after the war. I was there in '45 for three or four days aboard ship. Then we went over to Korea to move then up to China. I have been back to Japan and when you see the growth, and the technology, and the economic developments; Japan, of their country, it's very fabulous and you can see why we're in great competition with them today in the area of economic development."

What was Japan like when you first arrived in 1945? Can you describe the scenes you saw?

"Yes, Japan and Korea were similar. Japan during the war had occupied part of North China and also had occupied Korea. Japan was a country that was rickshaws. There were some things that weren't, but Japan and Korea were two countries that I have returned to that I did serve in both of the countries. Korea more than Japan, and then I was just back in Korea this last five months. In April of 1990. I think it showed them that what they were doing were Pan Munjom and the 38th parallel and you could still see some of the action that had gone on in Japan and Korea during the war."

What was your impression when you heard about the atom bomb being dropped?

"Well, I think the atomic bomb was developed right there around August or September of '45. I think when the news went out about what a bomb that was and how much destructive power it did, you know that the war was coming to an end. But we did drop one more, and I think that really brought it to a close. Some people....President Truman at that time had to write of it and be critical, then again when you think of all the American lives that were saved by using the bomb, I think it certainly overshadows that. If they hadn't used the bomb, I would say hypothetically, the war may have gone another 8 months to a year. The amount of people we lost in the islands and World War 2.....I think that would have been a terrible price to pay. It was a sad situation that happened, but it was one of need.

Edward Case was 18 when he was drafted into the Army for World War 2.

What branch of the service were you in, where did you serve, and how long did you serve?

"Field artillery, and I served about two years in the Army."

What was your rank?

"Technician 5th Grade."

What was your job during the war?

"I trained for motor mechanics, and later I was made a mail clerk."

Were you involved in battle at anytime?

"In two battles."

How did this affect your way of thinking? What were your impressions of the battle?

"I felt sorry for the people who were the victims, but like I said, I was awfully young. At nineteen years old, I was in battle and when the war was over, I was two miles from the front in Germany."

Can you tell me which battles you were in?

"Central Europe was one of them. Rhineland and Central Europe."

Were you injured?

"No, I was not injured."

Could you describe what your job did for the war effort?

"I was ammunition handler."

Could you tell us about that?

"Well, I loaded 155 Howitzer shells on the truck and then unloaded them, they weighed 94 pounds a piece. We had to pick up one in each hand and throw them on the truck. Ninety rounds on the truck."

What do you remember most about your time over there?

"Well, I remember going through some towns after they had been bombed and seeing them still burning. I was riding on the back and we went through a town about midnight. I was cold before we went through, then I had to pull my coat off going through because it was burning so much. Another time we got lost from our outfit and ran across a Tiger Tank that was still running, and we knew we were getting too close to the front so we turned around and went back, but we heard it running out there and we knew we wasn't supposed to be there."

Can you explain your most rewarding experience that happened in the war?

"I suppose it would be trying to help the victims out over there after the war was over. We were in the occupation army almost a year. We tried to help the Germans out over there."

Would you explain what an occupation army is?

"That is where the United States kept us there to get the country back on its feet. We were pretty close to Berlin for a while, then we were in Frankfurt. We tried to help people get their lives back together, and help rebuild the country."

What were your impressions of the enemy?

"We were fighting against the Nazi people. They didn't believe in God, and we did, but we were fighting against Hitler."

Did you think God was on your side?

"Yes."

Did you hear stories about how they treated their concentration camp victims and things like that?

"Yes...we were close to where some them were. Some of the men in the outfit saw the people in concentration camps and seen what they had done with them. After they died, they laid them out on the ground like pork."

There was alot of support for you boys, wasn't there?

"Oh yes. I got a lot of letters from my relations and friends from back home, but there were some guys who didn't hardly get anything. Seemed like I always had mail coming in from somewhere."

Do you know any of the War Mothers?.

"They had War Mothers and they had flags they hung in the windows. A blue star for the ones in the States, a silver star for the overseas, and a gold star was for mothers who had lost a boy."

At the time, what did you think you were fighting for?

"For freedom. We were fighting because they were going into those countries and running over them. They were treating people bad. Killing them for no reason at all. We were in there to try to keep them from killing anymore people."

Where were you when you found out the war had ended?

"About two miles from the front, around Clow River, not too far from Berlin."

And what were your reactions?

"Well, we didn't know it was over and we were with our battery commander and he said, "I'm going to stop and ask the MP's what's going on." And we asked them, because we were trying to find our outfit, the German Army had given up and went home and got their families and had them on wagons and were bringing them over to our side, because they didn't want the Russians to get them. The Russians were on the other side and they wanted the U.S. to take them prisoners because we treated them better than the rest of them."

How long did you stay over there?

"I was over there about a year after the war had ended as part of the occupation army."

How did the war affect your life afterwards?

"I was just a young boy. It really didn't affect it too much, I don't think. But I can understand what the boys are going through now. I wouldn't want my boy to go but if he had to, I'd back him up."

After 50 years, do you still feel the same about why war has to happen?

"Yes, I do."

Do you think it was for the right reasons?

"Yes. (Starts showing money) This is German money I picked up over there where some of the banks had been blown up and it was laying on the ground. So I just picked it up."

Was it still spendable at the time?

"I don't think this was. No. They changed their money every so often so that people couldn't save it too much. That's ten marks...that's called marks over there. This is from Netherlands."

How did you come about getting that?

"I got a three-day pass and went over there. Now here's German money. New German money. This is French money. They called it "francs"."

Did you go through France, too?

"Yeah, I went through France, too. I went over on the Queen Elizabeth. It used to be a passenger ship. It was an English ship, and there was 22,000 of us on board. It took us six days to go over."

You said this showed your rank?

"These here are hash marks. Six months for every one. That's field artillery. This is an ETO ribbon for Europe with two battle stars. This was a good conduct medal. This is a victory ribbon. That's my dog tag and some coins I picked up. Here's a bullet. Here's my cap."

Fletcher Dickey went into the service at age 31 and worked in the Seabees. After World War 2, he was very active in the Muncie branch of the American Legion.

How old were you during World War 2?

"During World War 2, I was in the service at the age of 31. I was in the Navy signed to the Seabees, or Naval Construction. I came out as a carpenter third-class. We built landing strips, docks, barracks, that was just about our limit of construction."

Where were you stationed during the war?

"Boot training, Camp Perry, Virginia. Went overseas to Honolulu. We stayed in Honolulu for 10 months, and then we went to the Mariannas. I was on Tinyan for 12 months."

Were you involved in battle?

"Actual combat, no. We were under bombardment, but no hand-to-hand combat."

You weren't injured in any way, were you?

"In no way."

So, how did your job benefit the war effort?

"On Tinyan, we built the runways for B-29's, and from Tinyan, the B-29 took off and dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan."

How did you feel about the dropping of the bomb?

"It was just a weapon of war."

What do you remember most about World War 2?

"Friends I met, and the comrades I served with. And being away from home, from the time I took boot camp, I think I had 10 days leave, then I wasn't back home until after or about three months before my discharge, so most of my time was spent overseas."

I've heard of some people sending their relatives in that war the war boxes. Did your family send you anything?

"Oh yes, I received them. I received money from them which I couldn't use over there...wrong printing on them. The currency in Honolulu had the big name "Hawaii" stamped on it. Otherwise, it was not used...the merchant would not accept it. Of course, we could always take the bills to ship's service in our outfit and exchange it for exchange currency."

At the time, what did you think you were fighting for?

"Well, my experience in the South Pacific, I didn't see anything down there in my almost 3 years that was worth the life of one serviceman. As it turns out, Honolulu, the Hawaiian Islands, which we have today as our 50th state, but it's not part of us. Seems like we permitted other countries to come in and take over what I fought for 50 years ago. I don't appreciate it. The islands are Japanese-owned now. The real estate, the buildings, everything."

Did the war experiences change your life? Did you just come back to Muncie and settle down?

"Well, I came back, went in from Richmond, Indiana, I was drafted then I came back and settled in Muncie. In 1946, I was offered a job in Muncie, and I came back. I have made my home in Muncie since 1946."

Rollin Gill was in his early 20's during World War 2 and served in the Army in Europe. After World War 2, he attended Ball State and served as a teacher and administrator in the Muncie Community Schools before retiring.

How old were you during World War 2?

"See, I was drafted in 1944, which made me 23 years old and when I was drafted my daughter was two years old and my son was one, and it was the hardest job I ever had in my life."

What branch of the service were you in?

"U.S. 8th Infantry Division that served ETO. I was only in two years due to the fact, number one, I had a high draft number, number two, I had two children, number three, I worked at Warner Gear at the time making transmissions for Jeeps. With the combination of these three things, I wasn't drafted right away which probably saved my life."

What was your rank during the war?

"Corporal."

What was your job during the war?

"I was a rifleman during the war and when I came back from overseas, getting ready to be shipped to the Pacific and during my 30 day leave, they dropped the A-Bomb so I didn't have to go to the Pacific and until I got out I was a cook, which I really always enjoyed doing. On my day on, I had to get up at about 3 in the morning and work all day, but I had the next day off so it worked out pretty good."

Where were you stationed?

"I took my basic training in Little Rock, Arkansas...15 weeks of basic training then they sent me to Europe in a big convoy that took us 13 days because we zig-zagged so much going across the Atlantic avoiding the submarines. It took 13 days to go from the United States to the heart of France. Then they loaded us on boxcars called forty and eights -- that's forty men or eight horses. They jammed us in there and took us through Belgium, Holland, Northern France, of course, into Germany where they joined the ranks."

How did your involvement in the war affect you?

"Well, I am like everybody else, scared especially having two children at home wondering if I'd ever get to see them again...one was 1 and one was 2, but fortunately for me by the time that I got there, they were mostly just taking prisoners by the thousands."

What were your impressions of the battle?

"Well, after so many years, I almost forget...it was so many years ago...that was 1945...44, 45. As I did say earlier, I was scared to death. Anybody who says anything else, well, I don't think they were telling the truth. You never know which bullet or fragment might have your name on it, fortunately, I came back without any injuries and got back to my family."

Can you describe what ways you contributed to the war?

"I was in battle as soon as I got over there and then shortly there after, I got to thinking that Hitler knew I was coming and gave up. I received one battle star. I'm not sure if that was good or not."

How did you receive that?

"Just by participating in the battles near the Rhine River in Germany."

What's the most memorable thing that you can think of?

"Well, I might say the funniest thing and it really wasn't funny either, was one evening we were in camp and one of the G.I.'s had gotten a German officer's uniform and walked there into camp. It's a wonder he didn't get shot, fortunately, someone recognized him and we didn't shoot him. I don't know whether to call that funny or not, but that's one of my memorable experiences. I guess another was one of the fellows in our outfit was trying to destroy one of their mortars or 88's they called them, and we dropped a grenade in the barrel and he was so nervous he missed the barrel and part of the fragments hit him before he could get away. It was funny then, but it's not now."

What was the most rewarding thing that you would say happened to you?

"Well, I suppose, we thought that would be the war to end all wars and unfortunately it wasn't. I guess that was our purpose in being there, keeping our freedom and that sort of thing."

When you were involved in the war, what did you think that you were fighting for?

"My kids freedom, my freedom, your freedom."

What were your impressions of the enemy?

"Of course, they were all brain-washed by Hitler, they were just human beings like we are that had been brain-washed by Hitler. Once they gave up and were among us...I have been in situations where there were more prisoners than G.I.s but they were just like us. You couldn't tell the difference except for the looks."

Would you say that your main enemy was Hitler, or did you think of Hirohito and Mussolini as well?

"Of course, all were at the time, but I was more interested with Hitler, being in Germany. As I said before, they sent the 8th Infantry Division back to the States for a 30 day leave then they were going to send us to the Pacific...in fact, when I got to Ft. Leonard, Missouri, reported there after I came back from overseas, they had a great big sign on top of the gymnasium where they herded us all in that said, "ETO to Tokyo" in about 2 feet letters, but like I said earlier, they dropped the A-Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and we didn't have to go fortunately. I was very lucky."

Can you describe your feelings when you heard that the war was over?

"Oh, there was no greater feeling in the whole world, I guess. I mean, I was just elated and goosebumps and butterflies and all of that stuff just went through me to know that I might get back to my family at home."

Can you describe to us how the war changed your life in anyway?

"I worked at Warner Gear as a tool grinder before I went into the service. I really didn't like factory work and when I came back, one of the guys I worked with talked me into going to Ball State. I might add that tuition then was only $48.00 per quarter, compared to what it is now and I went on the G.I. Bill and it payed for everything, books, pencils, everything. I was so anxious to get out of the shop, that I finished my four years in two years and three quarters, not only that, but I had three majors; math, English, industrial arts because I wanted to be sure and get a job and get out of Warner Gear even though they offered me a better job. After I graduated from Ball State, I wanted no more of it and anyhow that's how I'm in education. Hadn't been for the Army, I probably wouldn't have been, because I came from a very poor family from the southwest part of Muncie, across the tracks as you might say."

When you got back from the war, did your friends and family treat you as a hero?

"I would say yes for the most part, yes, very much different that it had been in the past with other wars. The welcome, you just couldn't bear it. We had parades and all our names were in the paper, pretty good feeling....to know that we had accomplished what we had set out to do."

Has your impression of the enemy changed though?

"Oh yes, of course, Germans are our allies now. If they weren't brain-washed by Hitler, that wouldn't have happened the way it was. They have feelings just like us. I don't think they wanted the war anymore than we did, but they were brain-washed into trying to conquer the world and pretty near to got it done. Fortunately, for all of us, he did not get the job done and committed suicide in the end."

Howard Miller was 20 when he joined the Army and was discharged at age 24. He served as a medical corpsman. From his family, six brothers served in World War 2. After the war, he worked for the postal service and is retired in Muncie.

In which branch of the service did you serve?

"I went into the ordinance department, enlisted, and stayed there for only two or three months and went into the aviation cadet program, took the examination at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas and was in there a few months. They decided they needed to cut back on that program so they came out with a blanket order that stated people who came from the ground or service forces had to go back and when I went back, I went into the medical corps instead of ordinance. Why, I don't know."

Could you explain what the ordinance corps did?

"Our outfit was to perform heavy maintenance on large trucks. That's what we were going to do. And the outfit eventually did go overseas, in that capacity."

What was you rank in the Army?

"Corporal"

What specifically did you do?

"I was a medical technician in a field hospital. Mostly, we made up surgical packs for surgery and we assisted at the table, while surgery was going on. Our only patients were mostly head, belly and chest that they were too severely injured to be moved farther back and our casualty rate was very high."

During the war, where were you stationed?

"Oh, I started in France, Germany, Luxemburgh, Belgium, ahh..Germany and Austria."

Do you have any idea why you moved so much?

"Oh, we tried to keep up with Patton. That's a job in itself. We were following the Third Army. Many times they were going so fast that we would only be set up a day or so and we'd have to tear down and move farther up."

Did you see Patton?

"Yeah! Yeah, saw him in a command vehicle with his pearl-handled holstered sidearms and he was standing up with his hands on the windshield. The siren was going. He drew a lot of attention, when he was around."

Were you involved in battle specifically?

"Uh...We were one of the first medical outfits in Bastogne, Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge. I have a picture of the building we set up in....in Bastogne, and you can see there was a lot of snow and very cold."

Could you explain you feelings on the Battle of the Bulge?

"Well, it wasn't too much different, really, than any of the rest of the times when we were set up. We just, you know, had one specific job to do and that's what we were doing at the time. I remember going into Bastogne that they had tank escorts on both sides of our trucks on both sides of the road. It was still pretty much, a lot of activity going on around us at that time."

What were your impressions of the battle itself?

"Oh, there was a lot of death, which you get used to. We, as cold as it was, put our American fatalities outside on litters on one side of the building and the Germans on the other side. As soon as graves registration or whoever took care of them could, why they'd come pick them up. It's something you kind of get hardened to. It's not pleasant, but it's a job that's got to be done. We did it to the best of our ability, I think."

Were you injured in battle?

"No....well other than.....I had no injuries from the enemy part of it. I had sprained ankles and things like that. That winter was so cold that when you'd ride on the back of one of those six by six trucks and you're feet would get cold. When you'd jump off the back of it, you couldn't even feel you feet hit the ground. It was miserable."

How do you feel you job contributed to the war effort?

"Oh, I suppose so much as anyone else's. There was there not as much as the infantry that was being shot at and killed. We were shot at different times, but I don't consider myself any kind of a hero or anything like that. It was just a job at the time that we accepted and wanted to do. I'm very sympathetic with the ones that were out in heavy battles. I'm sure that it wasn't pleasant."

Could you describe what you remember most about World War 2?

"Well, after all these years, the one thing I remember most about the Battle of the Bulge was the cold weather. It's a....you just seem like you never.....you put on all the clothes you possible could. You stayed cold until...seemed like till spring. Then when we first went in France it was wet. It wasn't particularly cold, but none of us had dry socks or shoes, I don't think for three months, which isn't good for your health at all."

When did you go into France?

"Well, let's see. We arrived on the coast of France at six o'clock in the evening on October the nineteenth, we went off a British boat that took us across the channel. We threw our duffle bags out, they landed in a...luckily they landed in a landing barge. Then we had to climb down the rigging on the ship, down into the landing barge. There was still a lot of junk and trash from the invasion itself there. You couldn't put a big ship up anywhere. You had to go in on small PTL boats or something that small."

Do you remember going through Paris?

"Yeah, on pass later on. We didn't go through during the fighting any. The fact of the matter is, we didn't set up as a hospital till, I would say, early December before the Bulge."

Where were you when the Battle of the Bulge was taking place?

"Nancy, France. The Third Army pretty much was all in that area. The whole Third Army itself took off for the North up into Belgium."

Did you get up into Bastogne?

"I was stationed in Bastogne. We set up a hospital in Bastogne."

What was your most rewarding experience?

"Coming home, I guess. It's uh...I don't think anyone actually enjoyed it a lot over there. Well, after the war was over, it wasn't all that much. You weren't allowed to fraternize with the civilians, while the war was going on, but that was relaxed a few days after the war was over. You could talk to the German people, by that time. It was a little different than it was before. I also have a picture here of the little town I was in the day the war ended. Geiselhan, Germany."

At the time of the war, what did you feel you were fighting for?

"Well, I don't know. Back in that day and age, we just thought that was the thing to do. Hitler and Mussolini, not the Russians at that time, but they were out to conquer everything they could. I'm sure that if the United States hadn't stepped in, they would have taken England, France, and maybe even invaded our shores. Most of the young men at that time, never gave it a second thought. Myself, if I had five brothers in there, I would have felt terribly out of place not being there myself."

Can you describe your feelings when you heard the war was over?

"Very happy! Although things did not change all that much for us. We were set up in a hospital at that time. We still had some casualties coming in. So, for the next week or so, it really didn't change too much on what we were doing. We also took German prisoners -- or injured. Our surgeons did a good job. We also had a lot of Belgian Railroad workers that were all in a train wreck that were severely injured that we took care of. That was in Arlon, Belgium."

Did you take care of the most critically wounded first, or was there any determining in who would be cared for first?

"Well, yeah...all of our patients were in real bad shape. If they were good enough shape that they could go on back, they just took them back to a bigger hospital. As I said, our casualty rate was very, very high because, we call them head, belly and chest. If you were hit in the head, belly or chest our surgeons usually took care of them there. Or, I remember one case where a fellow was lying there you could have finished cutting his leg off with a pair of...just one snip of scissors, but the surgeon says well, he has a blood supply and a nerve supply and his leg would probably be saved. It would be stiff. His whole knee was blown out. Of course, we never knew what happened to them after they left our outfit. We lost touch and you never could really know what kind of condition they were in after that. Probably, several of them died after they left our outfit."

What ways did your war experience change your life?

"Well, a twenty year-old kid thinks he knows everything and you find out pretty quick that you don't."

Do you feel being in the war affected your outlook on life?

"You value life much more when you are around that much death. Why, life seems much more important to you, after that than it would have otherwise."

Can you think of anything else that you want to add or would like down on tape?

"No, not really. The overseas part of it wasn't all that pleasant, but then today -- I'm glad I went through it! I wouldn't want to go through it again, but I'm glad I did at the time.

After the war, we were situated in a place that many of the German outfit were surrendering to us. We weren't even supposed to have any arms or anything, and here they came marching down out of the hills with their rifles across their shoulders and they had us outnumbered a 100 to 1. All we could do is to tell them to keep walking, keep walking. That was quite an experience.

Of course many of our guys in our outfit had weapons, small-arm weapons, but we weren't supposed to have them.

We drove through Frankfurt, Germany and it was completely bombed out and they had taken bulldozers and pushed the rubble to both sides of the street so the truck could get through. One of the first things we saw was a great big, long F.W. Woolworth sign laying in the rubble. Which, you know, we thought we were back home."

What do you remember about the trip to Europe?

"We left out of Boston harbor on a large cruise ship. With that type of ship, we slept in shifts. Luckily, I got the night shift. My bunk was occupied all day long by someone who had the day shift to sleep. We ate two meals a day. We stood in line most of the day to get those two meals. It was just as smooth as a mirror all the way over with a large ship. Coming home it was just the opposite. We were on a little victory ship and it was rough, rough, rough."

Did they ship you directly to England?

"Yeah, we were only in England a few hours. These little diary things we were not supposed to keep, but many of us did, and I still have mine. We landed in Liverpool, England. We took a train through London to South Hampton. I went through London about midnight, as I recall. We got on a British ship at South Hampton the next day and crossed the channel. I was only in England...not even a full day. On the British ship that took us across the channel they fed us fish twice a day which was lousy and sold us Hershey bars for a dollar a piece."

What types of food did you eat while abroad?

"We ate a lot of sea rations. Here is something else I got out here. In your sea rations, you have two cans. You have your main course -- like pork and beans -- and your other can you have your drink...a powder mix for your drink, a little package of cigarettes...which had four cigarettes in it, and I think a little, well, it wasn't plastic, some kind of spoon to eat with. You had to open those cans with these little can openers. We carried them in our watch pockets. When we got ready to eat our sea ration, we'd go around the can; today you would have the tab where you would pull off the whole top. This is the one I used when I was overseas.

Sometimes you were placed where you could put your main course in hot water and heat it before you opened it, and other times you ate it cold. We had cooks with an outfit if we were stationary for a few days, we got some hot food. It was kind of a mixture of things. Mostly, following Patton, we would no more than get set up, then we'd have to tear down and move. We never stayed set up....very seldom more than two or three days at a time in one place."

You've seen Patton?

"When he came to an intersection and there was traffic, the driver would put the siren on, and he expected everyone to stop until he got through. He would never sit down in the seat. He was always standing up with his hands on the windshield. He was a showman.

The saying over there was....they called him 'old blood and guts'. But, it was "his guts and our blood" is what we used to say."

Buddy Qui[illegible]e was age 12 when World War 2 started and entered the service at age 16.

How old were you when you entered the service?

"I entered the war when I was sixteen."

In which branch of the service did you serve?

"I went in the Marine Corps."

About how long did you serve?

"I spent seven years in the Marine Corps."

What was your rank?

"Well, when I came out, I came out as a corporal."

What was your job, can you describe it?

"Well, my first job in the service was when I went through basic, which I went through Paris Island, South Carolina. They called it the "hell-hole of the world"...pardon the language. I spent six weeks there, went through basic and came home for ten days. I reported back to Paris Island and was shipped out to Treasure Island, San Francisco. And from there, we boarded ship, a troop ship, and was sent overseas. In July of '46, I landed on Guam. The company I was assigned to was H and S Fifth Marine Combat Service Group. What we mostly did was take supplies up to the front line."

What year was this?

"This was in 1946. I was in the first marine division. After we got all set up and squared away, I was assigned to a rifle company. And about all we did was we did more of the mopping up of the campaign. So we was doing more or less the mopping up. The Japanese didn't know the war was over so they was still firing upon us and things like that. So then we was there for right around 3 months and then we left. And the next island we hit was Boogenville. We did the same thing there, the mopping up. What we was doing; we was following the 3rd Navy Division through the Pacific, which I had my oldest brother was in it. And so we hit one island after the other. We hit Boogenville, Tarawa, and the last island I hit was the Philippines. Then we was pulled back for a rest. The only island I didn't hit that my brother did was Iwo Jima. And after that, the war was pretty well over after Japan surrendered. Then we was stationed back; taken back and we stayed on Guam for a while. Then I came home in 1948, then in '48 I got married. I went back overseas. I went back to Guam, and from Guam I went to China and we was in China for about six months. And that's when things started to bloom in Korea. So I came out...my time was up...and I came out in 1949. And then I joined the reserves; and by that time, I knew the Korean situation was getting worse. I re-enlisted, and then I rejoined my outfit. They sent me down to camp in North Carolina. And then in camp, I put in my request to join my company at Camp Pendleton, oceanside. So I got my request and I reported back to them...that was in February, 1950. And there we went to...we was supposed to go on a Mediterranean cruise, which we never been there before, so...but we ended up in Korea. And I spent my time in Korea from 1950 to 1953. I didn't come home until they sent me home. When they sent me home I had frostbite real bad on my feet. I about lost those. And I didn't get any liberty or R and R in Japan like a lot of them did. I didn't care about it. I just wanted to stay there and get it over with. But then they sent us back; sent me back to Pearl Harbor. And I was in the hospital there in Pearl Harbor until I got back."

How many relatives did you have in the war?

"I had four brothers; two in the Marines and two in the Army. I had my two brothers that was in the Marines, my oldest brother and my brother that was next to me. My oldest brother and me went through the South Pacific, and my other brother, he was more or less stationed in Cuba. Around Cuba for most of his time. And I had my next oldest brother in the Army. He went through the European campaign. He was a tanker. And I had an uncle that was in the Army and he was killed over in Nancy, France. I had another uncle that was in the Navy and he survived. He just died the other day. My middle brother, he was stateside. He didn't get into any action."

Were you involved in any battles?

"Mostly in World War 2 I was involved in a lot of skirmishes, you know form a lot of sniping fire and digging Japanese out of caves. They had caves that they was back up in. And they wouldn't surrender, and you'd have to go in after them. They'd always pick a spot to where you couldn't hardly get at 'em. And you knew you was gonna lose a lot of people because they was pretty smart."

How did it affect you or what were your impressions of the battles or skirmishes?

"I was scared. I was petrified, you know, when you first find somebody shooting at ya and ya don't know where it's coming from. Mentally, well, I guess you might as well say you's like a little child, you know, and which I was still just a teenager and never seen or been around anything like that before. Yea, I was scared; I cried. I was wanting to go home. But at that time you can't go, you gotta stay there. And it's either you be killed or you kill them. So...I remember the first time I fired my weapon at anyone. I just closed my eyes and hoped, whatever. But after a few times, you don't think about it. You just go in and do your job and that's it."

Were you ever injured in battle or any skirmishes?

"No, no, the only thing I ever got was frostbite on my feet."

In the Korean War?

"Yea, that was in the Korean War."

Can you describe your contributions to the war?

"Well, on the island, I was finally, I was put into a mess hall and I became a baker. You don't feel like your eating a lot of K-rations or serving hot meals, so with the knowledge I had about baking...'cause when I was a teenager I worked in a bake shop back here in Muncie...I could make pies and cakes and things like that for them. We started rigging up mess halls where we could cook some hot food and bake some bread. And stuff like that's a big thing to the troops out in the field."

Can you describe what you remember most about the war?

"You mean about the hard times or the good times? I guess you had a lot of good times. You remember a lot of the good times you had in the service. You had a lot of fun. 'Cause it isn't all bad. When you get the job done and the island's secure, and everything, you know you're going to be pulling out of there and everything. Most the guys, you just sit down, smoke a cigarette or whatever, and just chit-chat...talk about home and what you're gonna do when you get back. Things like that. And you get letters, but more or less, a bull session. But you might be sitting there drinking a beer and the next thing you know you've got an air raid coming in on you, or artillery fire; something like that. You can always tell if the artillery is coming in on you or if it's gonna be short or if it's gonna be long, 'cause you get used to the sound and you can always tell if it's coming right in on you or what. So then you head for your foxhole. But then after it's over you get back and start talking and laughing and cutting up. But you gotta do something, 'cause if you don't you're gonna go crazy if war is all you talk about. You talk about world series, football, Notre Dame was one of the biggest college teams that everybody talked about and everything...you talk about high school, which Muncie is known for Muncie Central Bearcats, which they'd been heard about all over the country. You even heard about them out on the west coast. South will be there one day, I hope."

What was your most rewarding experience?

"I think the most rewarding experience was when it was all over. When the Japanese surrendered we was at sea. I think that was the most rewarding, well when Germany surrendered. That was very rewarding, but when it was all over and Japan surrendered that meant we was coming home. It was all over and we was coming home. We didn't know what we was coming home to, 'cause it takes a lot out of a country 'cause we gotta ration gas, and food, and sugar, and things like that. After the war was over, it meant a lot of guys came back and didn't have jobs and things like that, but there was plenty of work, you know, the situation back there was...the work situation was good. The town was growing and everything. It's hard to believe to see this town today, that back in the 1940's it was a booming town."

At the time, what did you think you were fighting for?

"Well, the reason we was fighting, it was 'cause we was wanting; we didn't want another country to come into our country. 'Cause we've always stood for our freedom. If you let some other country come over here; and the next thing you know you're under a dictatorship. You don't have freedom. And I think that's where a lot of us has lost sight of the United States stands for freedom. You have a free will to do what you want to, be what you want to be. If you want to become President, you can become President. But you're fighting to keep you homeland free. And you're fighting to keep your family free and everything. That's what it's all about. You don't let somebody over there come over and say, "We're taking over your country". And that's the reason we've always been, and a lot of countries look up to us because we are free and we are a powerful nation. And we're gonna get more powerful."

After 50 years, do you still feel the same way?

"Oh yeah, yeah, I'm up in my 60's now and I still feel the same way. If somebody would try to come and take over this country, I'd fight; I'd fight 'em just to the drop of a hat and you'd do the same thing. When you get up to my age, you're gonna say the same thing...this is my country, this is my home. My kids are growing up; they're free. We don't have any communism, we don't have any racists. Everybody is equal over here. We've went through a lot of hard times to do this, but we've accomplished everything we've set out to do. And we always will. No, I'm proud of this country."

Can you describe your feelings when you heard that World War 2 was over?

"I got down on my knees and thanked God and prayed. I was thankful that I was alive and that I was coming home. That's how I felt."

Did the war experience change your life, do you think?

"Yeah, it changed my life. I was, well you might as well say that I was bitter. And I was sorta mad too because you know I felt like I could've done more, but I was thankful that I wasn't wounded and I was thankful that all my brothers got back safely. None of us was ever wounded. I was sad because I lost an uncle, but we was just a fortunate family. We...I came from a pretty good-sized family. My dad died in '41...he died in February of '41, and then the war started in December. It was hard. My mother, she was a strong-willed woman and she went to work in a defense factory. It's New Venture Gear now, but it was Chevrolet. All during the war, all women went to work then. That's about all that was left, women. Women had to become the men and keep care of the family and things like that. So really you're pretty proud of your parents at that time, because they're struggling to keep the home body fires goin'. And then when you came back, most of the women was let out because they replaced men that was out there fighting a war. Everybody contributed everything. I can remember when it first started and I was just a teenager. The first thing I did...I went up and I sold newspapers; they had a big extry out you know. And I went up there and sold newspapers, and back then you know a newspaper was three cents. And if you got a nickel for a paper, boy you was makin' some money. I don't remember how many papers I sold. I think I sold two or three hundred papers and I made a lot of money; to me as a kid at that time. Most kids that was teenagers didn't have a car. You either walk or ride a bicycle. I can remember when I went with my girlfriend. The bus was a nickel. I remember puttin' her on a bus...she lived way out around shedtown...and I'd run and beat the bus out there before she got off. But those things like that you remember. But no, we...we had good lives. We had a lot of fun...played a lot of sports. In high school, we had one high school, which...you go down to a football game down there and couldn't find a seat. It's hard to believe that the insoil was filled with seats. It was completely surrounded. People was standing at the fences watching football, in high school. They had as many there as Ball State ever grossed...in high school. Basketball...a student couldn't get a ticket. They was all season tickets. The only way you could get in to see a ballgame or a sectional back then was you had to sell ice cream or popcorn or something like that. But those was good years. Things like that you remember. And when you go into service and you're facing situations that you don't know if you're gonna come out of or not, you get a little time to yourself. You think about those things. They're silly, but to you they mean a great deal. That's part of your life. Just like when you boys get older and you start having your own children, you'll sit down and remember things you did back here in high school. And I hope you never have to go to war, because war is hell, and I hope you never have to see it. I think war is silly and there's no need for it, but you'll always find somebody that wants to be a dictator and they try to take over the world. Just like the Gulf War we just got through. We didn't need to be there. We didn't have any reason to be there, but we couldn't let one man dictate to take over all the oil companies in the world, and that's exactly what we fought for. To show 'em that no, you're not gonna do it. Nobody else is gonna do it. We're too powerful a nation. And we don't dictate to 'em, we try to help 'em, but we'll still stand for our freedom. And that's what it's all about. We'll fight for our freedom. We're not gonna let no foreign country come in here and take our freedom...which they try to do all the time, but they don't do it."

Anything else you'd like to add?

"Oh, no, not really. Any more questions you guys would like to ask? I don't know there was a lot of fellas that lied about their age to get into service, and a lot of them died. Yeah, up where the courthouse, the old courthouse was we used to have a service board up there of the ones that had died during World War 2. I wish we had it back. Well, we don't have, but that's all a part of history."

Charles Vester entered World War 2 at the age of 21. After World War 2, he worked in Muncie at a local factory. He is currently retired and remains in Muncie.

In which branch of the service did you serve, and how long did you serve?

"I was in the Army and I served from November 13, 1941 to September in '45."

What was your rank?

"P.F.C. -- Private First Class."

What was your job during the war?

"Several jobs. Mostly I was an ammunition hauler. Load the ammunition up to the guns for the artillery."

Where were you stationed during the war?

"Well, I was down here in Fort Harrison then from Fort Harrison I went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina...that's where I got my training. Then I went to Camp Jordan and joined my outfit that I was discharged from and then we went from there to Fort Sil, Vermont to OCS school....Officers Candidate School. Then we came back to Augusta, Georgia. Then we went to Fort Dicks in the spring. Then in the fall, we went from Fort Dicks to Camp Jordan in Johnson, Florida...that's down around the gulf, around Tallahassee. From there we went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina where we started to take clothing check to get ready to go overseas then we shipped out of there and went to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and then we shipped out from there to England and we stayed there until the invasion."

Did you participate in the invasion of Normandy?

"Yes. We went ashore about 4 o'clock that evening of June the 6th."

So you were one of the first ashore?

"That evening I was in the rear eshlam."

How many people were involved? Was it a massive invasion?

"Why yes, it was the whole division and they brought us in on a L.A. state. That's one of the ships that the front end falls out of and they dropped up into the water about 4 or 5 feet deep. We went into France at Cherbourg. We cut the Cherbourg peninsula off. I was in the 4th Infantry Division of the 42nd Field Artillery. We went down to Predental and cleaned it up and then we came up through St. Lo and then on to Germany."

Being in battle, how did it affect you, your impressions of it?

"I couldn't hardly tell you. It was just a job we had to do. That's all."

What was the importance of this mission? What were you hoping to accomplish during this mission?

"Well, we won the war."

Were you injured in the battle at all?

"No."

Were there a lot injured in your company?

"Yes...mostly boys we lost. None of them got killed. There was few of them that got hurt in the beach by shrapnel. One boy, you know...they had a lot of mines, land mines. The infantry always put a yellow line around the mine to hold you in, to show you those were there. Of course, some of those boys were always trying to find something that the Germans had left and he lost a foot over it."

Can you describe what you remember most about the war?

"Oh, I don't know about the most. Well, the outfit I was in...we hit the Siegfried Line in three different places."

What was that?

"Well, it looked like stones sticking up from the ground that you couldn't get through...only at a certain gate...that was so the tanks couldn't get through. One time we cracked it and...oh...a few months later we came back through and crossed again at the Siegfried Line."

Now, your job was an artillery man?

"Yes. We'd take care of the ammunition. We hauled it and stored it in the trucks and when the guns needed it, we put one on each shoulder and ran it to the guns so we wouldn't have to make tracks with the trucks. The ammunition was the 105 self-propelled that was on a 28-ton tank."

What was the most rewarding experience you had in the war?

"Well...one was just before the breakthrough. I imagine you read about it. I was in Luxembourg at that time and we had came fromt he Herkan's Forest where we did a lot of artillery fire. Our infantry boys were beat out from going up farther and we went in to help the 9th Army to help shell to break them out of Herkan's Forest. There was mud and everything else in there and where we drove our trucks back and forth in there...I drug the brakes off my truck. So, after Herkan's Forest they sent us to Luxembourg. We were supposed to get a rest when we got down there...we only had a few days and I took my truck down to put new brakes on and then the breakthrough came there and my truck sat with no wheels on it...so we hurried and put them back on. We left out of there as soon as we could. When we left taht little town it was all afire. There was nothing left of it. I went back...I had left my bedroll back there and a month later, I got to go back in there and pick it up. There was nothing left, it was all shelled. We had lived there...there were barracks in that little town."

At the time, what did you think you were fighting for?

"We were fighting for the peace."

After 50 years, do you still feel the same way?

"Yes I do. I think they were doing the right thing over there."

Was there a lot of comradery in your division? Was it like a family?

"Oh, more or less. I was with them boys from May '42 until I was discharged in '45."

Do you keep up with any of them?

"Just one boy and he lives in Keysport, Pennsylvania and I only hear from him at Christmas time."

How has the war changed your life?

"Well...I don't know it changed my life any."

So you just went over there and did the job and came back?

"Right."

How long was it before you could come home?

"Well, I went over there in...I left the U.S. in January...last of January in '44 and then I came back here in the states, July of '45. I came back....which they split our outfit up over there in Germany to come back to the states and take three months training and go to the Pacific...but during the time I was home, in August, they declared the war over. I was in Durham, North Carolina at Camp Butler and I was discharged from there."

How did you feel when you heard that the war was over?

"Well, I was really thrilled it was over but when it came time to leave, I didn't know if I wanted to leave or not. I had been with the boys so long.

When they declared the war over I was going down to....I was in Indy...going to that camp down there, I can't think of the name now but anyhow we were going to another camp and we ended up at Camp Butler, North Carolina."

When you landed in Normandy on the evening of the 6th, do you remember what beach you were on?

"I think it was Red Uncle Beach. I think it was Omaha."

What was it like coming out on the beach?

"When I landed there the convoy was so slow you can't hardly get off the beach. We landed out there in that deep water...which we had our vehicles water-proofed real good. I was riding in the back end of that 2½-ton truck and the water came up in the back of it, that's how deep it was. We'd go out there a ways and we'd stop and we'd hit that sea wall. Get out, hit the sea wall...and when the convoy started up again we'd run back out again. I don't know we done that and the beach itself was just like a city. They had ships sitting everywhere. Dry-docked in low tide. We still hit the beach at the wrong time."

Was there a lot of trucks and tanks blown up; a lot of wrecked vehicles on the beach?

"Well, not that...as they was konked out in the water. They didn't have waterproofing and when I was on the beach there, they had a 2½-ton truck loaded with gasoline in them five-gallon cans. They hadn't no more than pulled it out on the beach when one of them German 88's hit it. It was awful, like a big fireball and smoke and if you never seen a Navy boy dig a hole, you seen it that day. They didn't have no choice because these ships were dry-docked. The beach was kind of flat, but it had a sea wall and that's where we dug holes to contain the shrapnel."

How quickly do you remember moving inland?

"Fairly quickly and when I was out in the water I saw some of the ships had upended. They hit the mines....exploded. You see, they had a full battery on them. They had four of those big M-7's....it's a tank...28-ton tank with a 105 mounted on it which they use them yet today...the 105's."

When you were talking about being in Luxembourg, what was the winter like?

"It was about like it was here in '78. It was cold and snowy. We put up a tent, so we'd lay down at night and scoop the snow away from us. We always carried a little stove with us and there was guard that kept the fire going."

Now, did you try to find a place to live like a bombed out shelter, or did you use tents?

"We lived in tents in the winter because it was too cold."

When you were talking about moving north, was that during the Battle of the Bulge? Did you get very close to Bastogne?

"No, I don't reckon. We crossed the Rhine River at Worms, that's the big grape place

"Dutch" Vonderschmidt was in his late 30's during World War 2 and was a paint salesman. During his retirement, he is an avid reader.

How old were you during the war?

"Last time I added in '45...I was 39 when it ended."

Describe what you did during the war.

"I was a salesman for a paint company in Indy. Now wait a minute, let me figure this out. Yeah, that was the bigger part of it."

Do you remember rationing stamps?

"Oh, Lord yes."

Can you explain them to me, what they were?

"A rationing stamp was a stamp given to you, allowing you to get a certain amount of the item mentioned on the rationing stamp, like sugar and I think coffee was rationed. Gasoline was rationed. You see, my wife did all the buying then and I don't know all of what was rationed her at home but it was a real good way to get everybody enough food, enough of whatever they wanted. It was taken advantage of pretty badly by a lot of people."

Where did you get these stamps?

"It seems to me that there was a building, an office just for that purpose. If I remember correctly, the office was on South Mulberry Street...just south of...can't remember that street....what was the name of that street that goes east and west about 400 south...no 1100 south...what's the name of that street?...South about 4th street."

Do you remember how frequently you received these stamps?

"No, I think you waited until you ran out until you got some more."

How was it determined how many stamps you received?

"Well, your job had something to do with it, size of your family, I think. That's all I can remember."

Describe your impressions of the enemy during World War 2.

"My impressions? They were skunks. That's about as best as I can say for them. I had a relative in the German Army. I'm very German myself and I had a relative in World War 2, he was killed. He was killed three to four days before the war ended, killed in action."

Explain how the war affected you family life.

"Not to me, it didn't affect my life at all. I kept working. I kept on selling. The only thing we had problems with was those women. There were no men. They were practically all gone and a man with a cigarette in his mouth could get any woman he wanted on the street. Take her to bed. It was awful."

Did you have any relatives in the war?

"Two cousins, that's all I know of that."

Describe the ways ordinary people supported the war effort.

"Oh, they contributed...every once in a while they had a collection. They'd take up old tires, stuff like that. Anything that was usable or reusable. They would take that and throw it into a big pile and that would be hauled away. They bought bonds, war bonds. Of course, they had to live with what they got with rations. They had to live with that. That's about all I can tell you. That's all I know."

Can you describe what you were doing and your feelings when you heard of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor?

"That was something. Just this morning I was thinking about that. You see the anniversary was yesterday. I lived in Terre Haute at that time and I was changing jobs. The successor of my job was in my office, going over things he would have to know to take over as manager of the outfit down there. He took it over and I came here. That's about all I can tell you about that. Except on more thing...we didn't know it until about 3 in the afternoon, when we got the dope and I turned to him and said, "This is it. This is going to bring it on." See we were flirting with war all the time with the Japanese and this is what brought it to a head. I think they intended it to...the Japanese...bring it to a head by that time."

Can you describe your feelings and what you were doing when you heard of the dropping of the A-bomb on Hiroshima?

"Of course, I didn't like Truman and he was the one who ordered the dropping of the bomb. I thought that the bomb should have been dropped on an island where the Japanese people would have seen how just of much of what happened as if they dropped it on the people. I don't think they should have taken the chance of killing so many people. Even though they were Japanese. We weren't supposed to like Japs, and I don't think we're suppose to like them now."

And your impressions of the end of the war?

"Are you talking about the German war or Japanese war?"

Both. The Japanese first.

"The Germans surrendered quite some time before the Japanese did. The night the Japanese surrendered I was doing my job. I had to stay in a motel up in the northern part of the state some place. I've forgotten the name of the town even, and as soon as I heard the news in the morning I came right home."

Did you participate in the war bond drive?

"I bought some bonds but I didn't participate in the selling of them."

Why did you buy the bonds?

"To be patriotic, that's about all."

Can you describe any unique experiences on the home front that were memorable to you?

"Oh, no I can't. One thing might be interesting to you. A girl I knew told me one time that her brother had been missing in action in Germany and they hadn't heard of him for three or four years and he finally came home...lived right down the street a way. I called the newspaper and told them they had an interesting story for the paper and they came out and interviewed the fellow and he had been travelling around with amnesia for three or four years, didn't even know his name until it finally came back to him and they got...his parents got calls from all over the United States, phone calls of congratulations and of course, to say they had the same situation, a son missing and they thought there might be a chance that their kid would come back too. That's about all I can tell you about that. That's one of the interesting things that happened."

Milton Wallace was age 17 when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He participated in the invasion of Siapan. He currently is a classroom teacher at Muncie Southside High School.

In which branch of the service did you serve and for how long?

"I was 17 when I enlisted in the Marine Corps; I was in 32 months. I was a private first class most of the time. For a while, I was an acting sergeant, but I don't know, I did something that they disapproved of, so they made me a corporal."

What was your job?

"I went through a training program which was for artillery, so I was in the artillery division branch of the Marine Corps...it was called the 10th Marines. To make it sound good, we could say that is was the most decorated regiment in the Marine Corps. Of course, it was decorated before I got in it."

Where were you stationed?

"Most of the time, overseas. I spent 5 months in Hawaii...had a terrible time there."

Why?

"I couldn't visit all of the girls on the island!"

Were you involved in battle?

"Yes."

Where at?

"I participated in one battle at Siapan, and if you've done much reading in history, you'll know that Siapan was where they put together the bomber squadron that dropped the atomic bomb. Siapan is an island not far from Tokyo."

What were your impressions about that?

"Oh, I don't know that I thought much of anything but this is what you've got to do. I think, many of the leaders like people under them who are relatively young....say 18 or 19 year-olds make the best soldiers, and the reason for that is because they haven't yet learned to think, or they don't know what fear is, and I think most of the time I faced anything that could be a traumatic experience...I was more concerned about what am I going to do and what's happening around me, than I was....it never occurred to me that I might get killed."

Toward the end, did you think you were winning or losing?

"Oh, we were always winning--invariably. You didn't think otherwise; then again, you were indoctrinated to think that. The Marine Corps decided that they were far superior to everyone else, and if you didn't believe it, all you had to do was read the posters...and they read them to you regularly. In a sense, you were brainwashed thinking you were super-human, and I believed it, I thought I was. Again, you're so busy you don't have time to believe anything else -- when we were in, we were kept busy. We were saving the world for a democracy."

Can you describe any scenes that stand out in your mind?

"Oh, there were many...oh, I don't know. Most of it would be rather grotesque. We participated in some battle, saw people die, I saw a Japanese airplane strafe a landing strip...you know, fire bullets down a landing strip. We all fired at him, but it didn't do much good, firing M-1's at an airplane; but we wasted a lot of taxpayers' money."

Could you describe how the battle took place?

"On the beach head that I made, we went into the ground in landing craft. They were either called LCM's or MCM's, and people were in those boats and they floated them in and they'd drop a ramp off the front of them and then you'd go off into the water which was hopefully not over their heads. You walked in with your 75-pound pack with guns. To look at it now, it looks as if it were a dangerous job, but I wasn't frightened...I had too many other things to do. Fortunately, when they dropped us off, the water was only a little above our waists."

From the beach, then what happened?

"Well, you were organized into...you were already organized into groups. And then, you went to the area you were supposed to and tried to, I guess, preserve yourself."

Were you being shot at?

"Yes, there were shots fired."

What was in those 75-pound bags?

"Some food, blankets, clothing, and ammunition. I guess that might cover it."

Can you describe the most rewarding event that happened?

"Oh, I don't think really anything was rewarding afterwards. I had a lot of fun on "liberty." Liberty is when you're given an opportunity to leave the base, and I spent some time in California....people in California were very friendly. I enjoyed those times."

Were you injured in battle?

"Yes."

Can you describe your feelings?

"Pain. I don't know, you do what you have to do. I think people make too much of "what were your emotions" and I have problems with Vietnam veterans now, because...I don't know, you were doing your job, you did what you had to do. I didn't worry about other things, maybe I was too young to. It was a little uncomfortable for a while, but they gave me some morphine, put me in a tent in a bunk and I really enjoyed that, I didn't have to fight. I spent 8 months in a hospital."

What was the injury?

"To my leg...a burn...a gasoline explosion."

Where were you when you heard World War 2 was over?

"I was in California getting ready to ship out again. Due to the injury, I was shipped back to the U.S. and then had been released from the hospital and sent to California. In fact, we'd been assigned to a ship and had been ready to board ship. We were going to board ship within a week."

Can you remember what you were doing?

"No, I don't recall. We were in training for our replacement outfit, so we were drilling or whatever. That's what we were doing when we found out that the war was over, and then they put me in a displacement office until I was dismissed."

Did you learn any lessons from the war?

"I don't know. Maybe that life's important. I don't know that there's anything that's really changed me very much. Maybe, if anything, accept your responsibility and do what you have to do. However, I suspect my father taught me that long before anyone else did. I don't know that the war really changed me, except maybe the outlook on life and how life's kind of important, and maybe how stupid war is. However, again, because people do stupid things because they themselves are stupid, that's the only solution."

You said you were fighting for...?

"A democracy. That's propaganda that they put out, not that I originated myself. I would not have thought of that, I'm sure. At the time I went into the war, I was probably only interested in being a macho 17 year-old. Maybe if I had another interest, it would have been girls."

After 50 years, how do you feel?

"Tired. I don't know. I think too often wars are economically motivated, there's too much. During the time prior to World War 2, there was a very serious depression and of course the war got us out of the depression, and I think too often that kind of situation exists. I think we're more socialist in our country now than we are capitalist. So, we didn't win a democracy, nor did we lose one, nor did it affect much of anything. I think it's interesting, too, that the leading economically superior country is Japan. They lost the war. Maybe it would have been better had we lost the war, maybe that would make us economically superior. We helped Japan become the leading economic country of the world, and they lost the war. We really defeated them soundly."

HOME FRONT INTERVIEWS

Naomi Atterson was in her early twenties during World War 2 and worked as a telephone operator. She is currently retired, is active in her local church, and lives in Muncie.

What did you do during the war?

"I...uh, was a telephone operator, I forgot about that."

In what ways would you say your job benefited the war?

"Well, being a telephone operator, you were the communication between all of the community, I guess you would say. I was in a very small town and it was up to the telephone operator to activate the fire alarm whenever there was a fire."

What did you do personally at the telephone company?

"At the telephone company I was a switchboard operator."

Can you explain what you remember about rationing?

"Oh definitely! Gasoline was rationed, automobile tires were rationed, and I think leather shoes were rationed, if I remember correctly. Of course, almost all food stuffs were rationed, especially meat and sugar, uh..canned foods. I know people would trade sometimes to get something they didn't have. Uh...I can remember...of course, my parents lived on a farm, so we had it much easier than a lot of people did have, because we had all of our own meat. They would trade meat coupons for something like sugar, because mother did a lot of canning, so we traded coupons to get what was needed."

Where did you get these stamps?

"Oh, you went to the county seat, not necessarily the county courthouse, but they would have a designated area set up and a rationing board, and you went there and you had to tell them your name...the husband and wife's name...the children's names, how many was in your family, so they would know how many stamps you were eligible to receive."

How frequently did you receive the stamps?

"Oh, I've forgotten. I think every month."

Could you explain again, what the eligibility was based on?

"Each person was just allowed so much, and if...I don't remember how much we were allowed, but I know it didn't make any difference whether it was a small child or an adult, you were allowed the same amount."

Can you describe your impressions of the enemy during the war?

"Especially Hitler. We thought he was one of the most evil-minded people that had ever come along, short of some way back in Bible-times, I guess. Then everyone was really shocked and just couldn't believe it when Pearl Harbor occurred."

Can you describe what you were doing and your feelings when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

"Yes! We had just returned from church...it was a Sunday morning...and I don't know who had turned the radio on, but I can remember standing in the dining room just listening to what had occurred...and it was just...we couldn't quite comprehend because we lived out on a farm and something like that, we knew it was something horrible, but yet it was just unbelievable."

How would you say the war affected your family life?

"Well, I'm sure it didn't affect ours as much as it did a lot of people, because of being farmers, and my brother was a little too young to go into the service. As the war went on, he was granted immunity from having to go because dad did farm a lot of ground and, of course, food stuff was needed and so he got to stay home because of that. We didn't get to travel like we had been, because my parents usually took a lot of vacations. But since gasoline was rationed, we stayed home. I learned to ride a bicycle then...that was my mode of getting to work most of the time, when weather permitted."

Describe the ways ordinary people like yourself supported the war effort -- like recycling, etc.

"Well, we made do with the things that we had...uh...we didn't buy many clothes, and even what we did...we made a lot of our own clothes. Of course by having our own food stuff, mother always had a large garden, and we would share."

Having to recycle, did that make you resentful?

"No, I don't think it did."

Did you participate in victory gardens?

"Oh, yes. Of course, mother had always had gardens, more so, because there were some things that she didn't always grow, I mean normally. But, she did at that time, and she would just increase the size of her garden. But, a lot of people, especially people that lived in town, would dig up part of their lawn to have a garden -- and even a small amount of vegetables helped tremendously."

Could you describe what a victory garden actually was?

"As I recall, if you had a victory garden, you could receive either free seeds or seeds at a reduced cost. Some of the people started canning -- they didn't do much freezing back at that time because there just wasn't the facilities for it. But people did a lot more canning of extra produce if you had it. And there were some places that...small canning factories that if you had produce, you could take it there and they would can it for you...tin cans for a minimal fee, so that people were saving all the food stuffs they could get their hands on."

Do you remember anything about the dropping of the atomic bomb?

"Yes, I definitely remember that and I know a lot of people...my impression was it was a horrible thing, but yet it was going to help end the war and help end the killing of men and a few, few women, nurses, then I thought why not? I know it was horrible over there in Japan when this occurred, and a lot of people were very angry at Truman for doing something like this. But, I felt and I still feel that he did the right thing. 'Cause the war could have drug on, I think...had it not occurred."

Can you remember what you were doing when you heard the war was over?

"Probably at work, I can't remember. I can remember church bells ringing and people were out in the streets really celebrating, but what I was doing, no I don't remember."

To what degree did you participate in war bond drives?

"I didn't personally, 'cause my income was so small that I would just put my money in savings accounts, so I didn't participate in war bonds. Although I know they were widely sold, and prominent people were out trying to get people to buy all the war bonds that they could to help support the war."

Did your parents participate in the war bonds at all?

"Yes, I think they did."

Can you describe what these war bonds were?

"Of course, that was one means of helping to pay for the war and you could buy them in different...I think the smallest ones you could buy was probably a twenty-five dollar bond. I don't remember too much about the war bonds."

And then they would draw interest, wouldn't they?

"Yes, I think it was 15 years that you had to hold them. Not having one, I don't recall."

Do you remember any memorable or unique experiences that happened to you during the war?

"Not really. Except that I had never learned to ride a bicycle. When we didn't have gasoline, I bought a bicycle and learned to ride a bicycle, is the only thing I can recall."

Dorothy Bailey was in her thirties during World War 2. She and her husband ran a small grocery store on the Southwest side of Muncie.

Can you describe what you did during the war?

"Yes, I worked in a grocery store...and it wasn't much fun. We had this building next door and it was our grocery store."

Did you own it or did you just work there?

"No, we owned it."

How did your job benefit the war effort?

"Well, I don't think it was a job, but both of us were air-raid wardens and we threw the hats away naturally. We had white hard hats...like the hard hats in construction."

Can you describe what an air raid warden is?

"When we had the Black-outs, they had them once a week, we had to go from our block...I had 2 blocks that way (North) and my husband had 2 blocks this way (South), and we had to patrol and if anyone had their lights on, we were supposed to report them if they didn't turn them off...they were fined."

How were you selected?

"You volunteered."

What was the purpose of the blackouts?

"Just like in London, if they'd come over here to bomb, they wouldn't have the lights as targets."

How long did they last?

"Usually from one hour to an hour and a half."

Can you explain how items were rationed?

"Well, meat was one of the hardest things to get...you could only get meat once per week and we'd get one side of beef once a week on Thursday. And then we had to ration it out and we had customers and we knew what they always bought, so we'd fix up packets. And a lot of times we had more for ourselves. We had a neighbor who bought meat on the black market from a grocer on South Madison."

Just exactly what was that?

"Well, he was getting meat that he wasn't supposed to have from other sources, and she would buy a roast or something like that for us. Sugar was very hard to get too."

Do you remember how frequently you got the stamps?

"No, I really don't. They had a book for sugar and coffee and that sort of thing, but I don't remember how often."

Do you remember where you got them?

"They had an office downtown where you could get these tokens."

What were these tokens? Were they the same thing as ration stamps?

"Yes, except...the red ones were for meat and the blue ones were for...I can't remember but it was for other things we had to get."

What could you get with just one token?

"Not much. If you wanted to have a roast, you had to have about 8 to 10 tokens."

How was it determined how many stamps a family got?

"How big the family was."

What about the income?

"No, as far as I can remember it was the number in the family."

Did you trade stamps in the black market?

"No, I didn't."

Did you know people who did things like that?

"I'd say this man who sold black market meat did, but I can't say for sure."

Was there a lot of this type of thing?

"Oh, yes a lot. We never did. If we did we'd probably be caught."

Once you got the stamps at the store, what did you do with them?

"We would take them into the downtown office. What they would do with them I don't know. We had to keep track of all the stamps we took in. I remember there was a minister who lived down the street, and he came in when I was counting the stamps and I said, "Will you come over here?", and I said, "Wouldn't this just make a preacher curse?" and he just laughed."

Could you cheat on the rationing stamps?

"I'm sure you could, but the people I knew, if there were extra stamps, you just shared with others."

Could you describe your impressions of the enemy during World War 2. Who did you think they were...were they mean?

"Well, I thought the head man was just crazy...just like this man in the desert today. I think there are similarities between the two men."

Did you have any relatives in the war?

"No, as I started to tell you, we had the grocery and they bought...the American Legion...the man that cooked was a friend of ours and we'd known him many years, we knew him over at Elwood, he bought groceries out here so my husband delivered groceries on Saturday night, and he came back and said that he'd invited three men from the American Legion out for dinner. I wasn't too happy about that. Usually the people who hang around there aren't too...you know what I mean...kind of...well, not my kind of people. But these three boys, one was from Boston, he was a Lutheran; one was from Pittsburgh, and the other from Winchester, Virginia. They had all been officers in the Navy, but in order to take specialized task, they had to go back to training. So we invited them out here and they came the first night, and they were such nice boys, and we had them back on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and just anytime they wanted to come out. I still hear from two of them. The one from Pittsburgh I lost track of."

How did their being in the war affect your life?

"Well, they were just like family, and when they went overseas, I sent them boxes and everything...it was just like part of my family was in the service, and I went to visit the people in Pittsburgh and he was home on leave and I had given each one of them red tokens, and he still had his. He had been in a foxhole and the man next to him had been hit, and he carried it all during the war. I thought that was kind of interesting."

What was in the boxes?

"Oh, food. This one boy from Winchester, Virginia, which is the apple capital of the world, we sent him some apples and on the box it said Winchester, VA, and said that by the time he got the apples, some of them weren't too good, but it really made him homesick to see that Winchester, VA on there. Sometimes I'd make him cookies and things like that."

Could you describe how you supported the war effort through recycling or victory gardens?

"We didn't have any gardens because we had a store. We had several neighbors who did."

What were they like?

"Oh, the staples, but there was a place over here...at that time it was Acme and Lee's Co. and they would let the people have gardens and however much they wanted. Some of those gardens were beautiful and they'd have everything in them. Beans, beets, carrots, and everything."

Were they pretty big?

"Most of them were pretty good-sized gardens."

Was there a big push for recycling?

"No, not at that time."

Do you remember anything about Gold Star Mothers?

"Yes. They had their flags in the window and they had an organization. I wasn't one because I didn't have anyone in it."

Can you describe your feelings when you found out about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

"I wasn't really for it, but if that's what it took..."

What were you doing?

"I was probably working in the store."

Do you remember anything about the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?

"I remember when they dropped it. I was another terrible thing, but it had to be done."

Do you remember public opinion? Did they think it was a terrible thing, or just a means by which to get rid of the "Japs"?

"I think most of the people around here thought it was just a means to an end."

Did most of the people support his decision to drop the bomb?

"I think so."

What about when the war was over?

"Of course, I was glad...As far as what I was doing, I was probably still in the store. We had that until 1956."

After the war, how long did it take people to go back to using money instead of rationing stamps?

"Gee, I don't think they had much rationing after the war. It didn't take long to change back."

Do you remember the war bond drives?

"I remember they had them...I didn't have any."

Do you remember how they operated?

"No."

Can you describe any unique experiences that happened during the war?

"No, not really."

Was it really that bad here in Muncie?

"Really, Muncie was in really good shape. The factories were going well...Warner Gear, Chevy..."

What was produced there?

"I think Delco might have made batteries...they shipped them overseas, so I assume they used them for the war."

Did your impressions of the enemy ever change? Did you feel sorry for them?

"I felt sorry for the people who were caught up in this bomb thing, because after all, the people....it was the heads of state."

How well did the media cover the war?

"Oh, they did very good...just like today."

Jim Bailey was in grade school during World War 2 and attended Wilson Jr. High School in 1945. His parents owned a local grocery store. He currently teaches Radio-TV at Muncie Southside High School.

How old were you during World War 2?

"Well, during the war I was in grade school, and by 1945, when the war ended, I was in Wilson (Middle School). I vividly remember the day that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. I was downtown at a movie and it was on a Sunday, and I was at the Wysor Grand Theatre. I don't remember the movie, but they flashed it on the screen that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and I got on the bus and went home, and I was excited because I had this news I was going to tell my parents, because I knew they didn't know anything about it because it was flashed on the movie screen. Well, of course it had been on the radio. That was before TV, back in the olden days, and my parents informed me that, yes, they did know."

Can you describe what you did during the war?

"Oh, being in grade school and junior high school, I mostly hung out at home."

Your parents owned a store?

"Yes, we had a neighborhood grocery store which at that time, in the 40's...was before supermarkets, and that's the way people did their shopping. Every two or three or four blocks, there would be a grocery store. The grocery was in one side and the other half was our home. My mother still lives there."

Can you explain how items were rationed?

"Well, not everything was rationed...certain things were and certain things you couldn't get anyway. Sugar was hard to find. Like beef was rationed, but poultry wasn't. All the chicken you wanted, turkey, that type of thing. Some other food stuff was rationed and they had different colors of stamps. They had blue...tokens I should say...they had blue ones and red ones and, all colors, I don't know. I don't remember which ones were which. People were allotted so much. They would go to the ration office and pick up so many tokens and so many stamps. So many coupons, well, they would bring them into our store and they could get a pound of beef with, we'll say a red token, but that may not have been the color. Then my father would have to keep all these, and then when he had 25 or so, then he could turn those in to the meat company, then he could get more meat or more canned goods or whatever was rationed. So he had to keep an accurate account to turn in to replenish what he was selling."

Could you tell me about the black-market rationing of these stamps?

"There was a black-market. I was too young to remember, to know much about it, but I did hear my parents talking. I know at one time tires were extremely hard to get, and somehow my father got a tire. He delivered in a grocery truck and to deliver you had to have tires, so he got one."

What determined how many stamps you got?

"The size of the family. In other words, if you had ten children, you got more stamps than somebody that didn't have any children."

So you had to give the stamps and then pay for the food? These stamps weren't a substitute for money?

"Oh, no. That was your permission to buy something. Your authorization, I should say."

Can you describe your impressions of the enemy?

"Well, of course, Hollywood had a lot of movies out at that time, which some of them are still shown on your television channels. And the Germans and the Japanese were always the bad guys, and everybody that had a German swastika on his collar was eminently bad, and everyone who had an American eagle on his collar was eminently good. And the same way with the Japanese. Now, they portrayed the Japanese as being more of a torture-type, but after things came out, and I'm not sure Dr. Siler would agree with this or not, the Germans were every bit as bad, if not worse, in the treatment of their prisoners than the Japanese were at that time."

How long did you expect this war to go on? Did it seem like it was going to last forever?

"Well, when you're 9 or 10 years old, yes it seemed like it was an extremely long time, yes."

Did you think if it was going to last a long time that you would have to enlist?

"No, because I was young enough that that thought never entered my mind. However, when the Korean conflict came along, they gobbled me up in a hurry. You didn't think they were that hard up for men then, did ya? That they'd take me."

Can you explain how the war affected your family life? Did you have any relatives who were in the war?

"I had an uncle who was in the Army, yes. That's the only relative."

Was he wounded?

"No, no, he never left the United States."

How did that affect your life? Did you write him?

"Well, I didn't write him...he lived in Elwood. Now I know my father wrote him...that was his brother. I recall my uncle coming home on furlough or leave. He was in his khaki army uniform. I thought that was neat at the time."

Can you describe the ways in which ordinary people supported the war effort?

"Victory gardens were very popular at that time, and a lot of little plots of land people cultivated. Vegetables and what you could grow were grown. Over at Wilson, they had an old...well, back then it wasn't old...it was a Ford Ferguson Tractor. What we call an "eight-in", and Dr. Myer, who was the principal of Wilson at that time had a lot of ground plowed up...it would be where the baseball diamond is now... and people who lived around the area could come over and plant a garden over on the school property."

Did they recycle things?

"I don't recall of any recycling, no."

How about civil defense?

"OK..."

Did you have any female relatives that went to work during that time?

"No, I don't believe Muncie had anything in the way of defense factories. Your civil defense question...they had, at the time, what they called black-outs, because in case that we were to be bombed by the enemy here in Muncie, and the whole city was cordoned off in a grid system, and it was broken down into sections and blocks and this and that. Our grocery store...my father was what was called a zone warden...and then he was in charge of 20 blocks. So, he had all these block wardens underneath him. They would sound the siren for a black-out...course you knew in advance...it was in the radio and papers that at 9 o'clock Tuesday night we were gonna have a black-out drill. Well, at that time, they had the helmets they wore. They were white, and as I recall, they had some kind of an emblem on them. Then each block warden would go around and make sure all the lights were off at every house. If he could see a light shining, he'd go up and knock on the door...he or she, because my mother was a block warden... and she said the other day she didn't know how she got the nerve to walk a city block at night, but she did...things were much safer then. But, then all the block wardens would come back to our store, and they would report that everything was darkened. In the dark, my father called the next level up, maybe a sector, and he'd report that his own level was secure, and so on and so forth, for the whole city of Muncie. Muncie wasn't the only city that done this. That was done all over the United States."

Can you describe what you were doing, how you felt when you found out that the bomb had been dropped?

"Well, I don't remember where I was, but, I was at Wilson at that time. We were all happy, though, that the Japanese surrendered, and that would mean an end to all this mindless killing that had been going on, yes, everyone was naturally happy."

To what degree and for what purpose did you participate in the war bond drives?

"I know we bought war bonds, and that it wasn't that uncommon at that time that maybe a Christmas present would be a war bond. And they had different denominations.

I know they guaranteed you so much money at the end of that period of time. We participated because people were patriotic, and that was one way if you were not in the service and you were not working in an industry that was making products that went into the war effort, you could support your country and help finance the way."

Can you describe any unique experiences that happened to you during the war?

"I suppose one thing I remember is the day Roosevelt died. We had a little side yard by the grocery store and there were some of us kids out there playing ball, and my mother must've come out and told me President Roosevelt had died. At the time, he had went into his third term, and we all wondered what would happen because it was during the war. Some of the slogan I remember...like when Dewey ran against Roosevelt. In fact, Dewey was in Muncie, and he stopped on a train down by the Four Tracks. My father went down and saw him, in fact, he had a picture of Dewey when he was in Muncie when he ran. But the Democrats slogan was "Don't change horses in the middle of the stream." And the "Win the Wilkie" thing...of course, Wilkie was from Elwood, and he also ran against President Roosevelt unsuccessfully."

Do you remember anything about Blue Stars?

"Well, if you put a blue star in the window, that was indicative of a son being in the service, and a gold star was given to families who had lost sons during the war."

Kathryn Carpenter was age 22 when World War 2 erupted and worked as a nurse aide and in a store. She is now retired and lives in Muncie with her husband.

What did you do during the war?

"First, I was a nurse aide and then I worked as a cashier at a grocery, and then after my husband's basic training was over, I went with him because we weren't allowed to visit before basic training was over. I went to visit him for a week and decided I couldn't be happy back home again, so I moved out there to Salina, Kansas, and got a job. When I visited him for the first time, you had to go on the Army bus out to the base and when you got to the MP gate, you could not go in until you gave all the answers that they asked you. So they asked me his name. I told them his name. They asked me his rank and I said, "94 division." They asked me his company and I said, "PFC". I had everything wrong. I had all the answers right, but in the wrong places. They let me in because I had all the stuff they asked me. I went in there and stayed at the USO house for three days. I then went into town and got a room for a week and when I got back home, I wasn't happy without him, so I went back to Kansas. I stayed there until he went on maneuvers and then my girlfriend's husband was with him so we went to Tennessee. It was hard for a civilian to get a ride on a train unless you knew a soldier, so she and I went down to the depot one hour early so we could get a seat on the train. We were the last ones because we hadn't learned the tricks yet. You grabbed a soldier and got on the train, that way you got a seat. After they allowed the civilians on, there was nothing left unless you wanted to sit in the baggage. I said, "We'll take anything." So we sat in the baggage car."

So you worked as a cashier?

"At a supermarket in Salina, Kansas."

So you know a lot about rationing process because you were behind the counter?

"Oh, yes. And more than once I took the stamps that people were supposed to give me and I'd forget to take their money, so we came up quite a few times short."

Can you describe what things were rationed?

"Sugar, coffee, gasoline, rubber tires, nylon hosiery, and shoes."

Each item had a different stamp?

"Yes, we had a book for each item."

Where did you get the stamps?

"I just can't remember."

How often did you get the stamps?

"I don't know, but I know they had to last for a certain time. I didn't use all my stamps, money was kinda short then. I still have one for sugar and one for shoes. One had a letter on the stamp, sugar I think, and one had an airplane."

How did they determine how many stamps each family got?

"I don't remember, that was forty years ago."

What were your impressions of the enemy?

"I hated them because they had taken my husband from me. That's how I felt toward them."

Who did you think the enemy was?

"Germans, I didn't think too much about Japan because my husband wasn't there."

Can you describe how the war affected you family life?

"Well, in ours, our son was born while he was gone. That kept me occupied, taking care of him. I wouldn't let anyone else take care of him because I couldn't trust anybody; that's how precious he was. One day, a Western Union boy came to the door and I started screaming and my mother started screaming and my sister did. We thought he...her husband had been killed and they [the Army] were sending us a telegram, so we wouldn't answer the door. The lady next door heard us screaming and came over and said, "What on earth's goin' on?", and I said that there was a Western Union guy out there. We won't go answer the door to take the message. He was for us. She said, "If you won't, then I will." So she went to the door and the telegram was from my girlfriend. Her husband was stationed with Earl.

She had received a telegram where he had been killed. We felt bad for her and she wanted to know if Earl was okay. So I said, "Thank God it wasn't him!"

Did you have any relatives in the war?

"No, my brothers were too young to go."

You were a civilian and many civilians helped in the war effort. In what ways did they help?

"Well, I know there were factories that produced war supplies. I worked one week at Durham Manufacturing Company. I had to screw this piece of metal into something they put the ammunition into take the burrs off of the threads. I lasted one week and I said that I can't do that 'cause it hurt my wrist too bad. As far as my working for the war effort, that was it. I didn't do anything else because I had the baby and took care of him."

What things did others do for the war effort?

"Well, I know there were alot of people in the Civil Defense. We couldn't have street lights on after a certain time. They'd have wardens walk around to all the houses to make sure all your lights were out. People worked in hospitals to make bandages to send overseas, and applicators, but I didn't participate in any of that."

Did you have a victory garden?

"No, you couldn't have one in an apartment."

"My husband called us and told us when he was down at Camp Atterbury, he told us to come down and pick him up. His father, and I all went down to Camp Atterbury to pick him up, and we left at 6:00 in the morning and thought sure we'd find him by nine. We waited and drove all around the camp. I was very disappointed, so we went back home. As soon as we got home, he called and said, "Pick me up at the depot at 12:00." Well, we could hardly wait until 12:00. We went down there to pick him up. Of course we always had little pet names for each other, so the first thing he said was, "Hi, toots." We brought him home and our son had never been around other men, so we went and stayed at his mother's house that night. Our son began to cry because there was somebody strange in bed with him."

Joyce Case was 9 years old when World War 2 errupted. She will retire in 1991 after working as the cafeteria director of Southside High School.

Could you tell what type of jobs you did during the war?

"The type of jobs I did during the war...well, I didn't do jobs, I was only 9 years old. But I remember it very well the day the war broke out. It did affect my family. My father had to go into the war. He went into a factory and he was not a factory man but a meat cutter. It affected our family alot because of the change in employment."

What school did you go to?

"Lincoln Elementary."

Can you remember anything you did for livelihood, did you go to the movies or anything like that?

"During the war, we didn't do too much entertaining at all. We had a lot of family members that were in the war. We had a close knit family and we had a lot of family gatherings. We didn't go to the movies. We didn't have television or anything like that. We mostly just had our games and things like that, that we could do at home."

Did you have any family members overseas?

"My uncle, a very close uncle, that lived next door to us was across sea."

Did you send any packages to him?

"Yes, we did."

Did your family collect items like tin, aluminum or rubber for tires?

"Yes, we did. My father was a great hand at that. We lived fairly close to a railroad track and sometimes they would throw off old tires and coal. He would go down there and get coal for us to keep warm with. He would take old tires to be recycled."

Did you grow victory gardens?

"Yes, we did. We had 2 city lots that we planted gardens. It was the first year that I really had to dig deep and help them a lot so that we could have food to eat. I think that the rationing was what really bothered me the most. I was used to having an ample amount of food, not like we would have today, but we had enough to not be hungry. But when the rationing came on it really limited what you could get or what you could make at home. So you had to grow your gardens."

What were the stamps for?

"The stamps were for mainly gasoline for my dad's car and sugar was one that was rationed. I remember my mother worked for Ross' Corner and was a buyer and nylon hose was rationed. I remember you could just get a limited amount of them but you didn't have stamps for them."

Do you remember how often you got the stamps?

"I think it was once a month, and it was according to how many members were in the family. My grandmother lived with us so I remember getting extra because she was at our home."

How much gas could you get on a rationing stamp?

"I don't remember. It was a small amount. I would say just a few gallons."

Do you remember where you went to get these stamps? Were they mailed to you or did you have to go collect them?

"There was a stamp office you could go and pick them up at. It was kind of like the welfare office today."

Do you recall any black marketing of the ration of stamps?

"I remember that my dad worked at the commissary where they passed out free food to people who were really desperate that didn't have jobs. It wasn't really welfare but it was a government project and he told us at the time there was a lot of black males with the stamps. People selling them under the table and people not getting any because people were taking them and sold them."

Can you describe your impressions of the enemy during the war?

"As a kid, I thought they were just people. My mother had told us they were not monsters and even though they had blown us up and attacked Pearl Harbor and my uncle went into Germany; she tried to explain to us they were humans just the same as we were and we had a difference with them. My mother was not overly fanatic with religion, but she believed in God and she thought that wars were part of life."

Could you explain how the war affected your family life?

"We had an uncle we were very close to and he was injured very bad and that put the family in turmoil for any of my cousins that had to go on into war then...that got drafted on down the line. As they got into Germany and the war lingered on, the more our family was affected."

How was your uncle injured?

"He hit a land mine. He was delivering on motorcycles. That was the way they delivered messages from unit to unit and he was blown up."

Can you describe your feelings on the Japanese bombings of Pearl Harbor?

"Now that I have been to Pearl Harbor I can understand much more why they struck at the island."

Could you tell us about the end of World War 2; the dropping of the A-Bomb? Can you remember where you were at or what you were doing?

"Yes, I remember very well where I was at. I was at a girlfriend's house when my mother called there and told me to come home; she was excited that the war had ended and we were also concerned about how it ended...with the A-Bomb. That was frightening to me as a kid, even though I was a few years older I was a teenager then and it really bothered me."

Did your family participate in the war bond drives?

"Yes, I remember a lot of that."

Do you know when you can cash those in, what was the year on those?

"I probably heard, but I don't remember."

Can you describe any experiences that stick out in your mind about World War 2?

"I think the suddeness of what happened at Pearl Harbor is a terrible thing to have to cope with. A lot of things happened all of a sudden but I don't think there is anything like a world war."

Crystal Irene Jordan Grubbs was age 28 during World War 2 and worked in a defense plant.

What did you do during the war?

"I worked at an airplane plant in Fort Wayne. I made coils for airplanes."

What were the coils for?

"They were for some sort of fighter planes."

Can you tell me what items were rationed?

"They rationed coffee, sugar, nylon hose, gasoline, and a lot of products. You couldn't buy shoes sometimes during the war. You had to have a coupon. We had to go to a building every month to get our supply. Sometimes we could get extra if my husband would drive back and forth to work. If he car-pooled...whoever drove that week got extra ration stamps. When you were out, you had to stay home. You could get just so much. The gas price wasn't high. It was only about 25 cents a gallon, but we didn't have much of it. It was rationed."

Why was it rationed?

"I don't know. Maybe they needed fuel to fly the planes or send the soldiers. I know why the rationed sugar, because they didn't make sugar. They didn't ship coffee. Nylon hose was used to make parachutes. If you could get nylon, sometimes they weren't any good. The soldiers got the good ones, which was okay."

Do you remember the stamps?

"The only thing I remember is the gas stamp. It had gas on it: G-A-S. It was a green stamp. It was kind of like they used to give the green stamps when you bought things, you were given stamps and could get prizes with them. Rationing cards were in little booklets a little bigger than stamps come in. They had so many pages in a book. I don't know how much you could get with each stamp. I remember with one stamp you got 5 pounds of sugar. Of course you had to pay for the sugar, but you had to have a stamp too. A lot of people had black market stuff. At some groceries you could get food without the stamps; you weren't supposed to tell anybody. You could get sugar and coffee. People drank a lot of coffee. The price wasn't so high, 69 or 79 cents a pound."

How often did you get stamps?

"Once a month. Sometimes you could get more if you could prove you needed more stamps. Most generally you got a limited amount."

How was it determined how many stamps each person received?

"By the size of the family."

What were your impressions of the enemy during World War 2?

"I guess I hoped we'd win the war. I didn't have any ill feeling toward the enemy. Two of my boys went to fight. Well, they went after the war for the occupation of Germany. They spent four years in Germany. Jim, my other boy, did not have to go, he was in the states in communications. He did a lot with radio communication. He was not on television."

Who did you think the enemy was?

"The Germans and the Japanese."

How did the war affect your family life?

"It did not directly affect it, because I did not have any boys in the service during the war. If I had boys fighting, it would have been different. It was over before they had to go. They went to just clean up the mess."

Did you have any other relatives in the war?

"I had a cousin that was in the war the whole time. He came out okay. He wasn't wounded. He was a Lieutenant Colonel, so he was not in battle."

How did his being in the war affect your life?

"Well, I was not close to him. It didn't really affect my life to an extent. I was just interested that he was okay. They had to live on the base wherever the fighting was, his family and two children. He was in Germany under Eisenhower's command. He was under Patton, too."

Can you describe the ways civilians supported the war effort?

"They worked in the factories, my husband worked in Fort Wayne, where they made parts for airplanes. I don't know what parts he made, but we supported the effort by working in the factories and making parts for different airplanes. We did that until the war was over."

What items were recycled and grown in victory gardens?

"I don't remember too much about that. I think a lot of people recycled, but we didn't."

Can you describe what you were doing when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?

"Yes, I was at church at Modoc. We were practicing choir when we found out about Pearl Harbor being bombed. It came over the radio about noon. We had practice that afternoon. Everybody was blue and sad. A lot of people had relatives there. They did not know whether they were killed or not. There were about 35 people in the choir. It was a sad time. There were a lot of tears shed. We did not know about all of the fatalities. We just knew a lot of people were killed. It was on a Sunday. Everybody was sad because we were afraid that our husbands and relatives would have to go to war. At that time my oldest son was too young to go to war. He was in his teens. I just couldn't imagine them going to war because I didn't think it would ever be over."

Is that when America began fighting?

"That's when they began fighting the Japanese. I'm not sure about the Germans. The Germans were in it. I'm not sure the Germans were in that battle right then when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor."

Do you remember where you were when the A-Bomb was dropped?

"I lived in Fort Wayne, when they dropped it. I don't remember what year it was. It was kind of scary because we didn't know whether they would drop a bomb on us. That ended that part of it. When they dropped the bomb, it put the fear of God in them. They began to back off."

What were you doing when the war ended?

"I was working at a telephone office in Ossian. I was in charge of that office. It was a little switchboard in my house. Everybody began ringing. I did not even have enough arms to answer people. They were calling, "The war is over, the war is over!" You could hear shotguns and bells all over that little town of about 1,000 people. They were out in the streets hollering and screaming. I was trying to run the switchboard. It was a mess, to tell you the truth. I was trying to answer calls because I didn't know what the calls were. Some of them may have been emergencies. Most of them just wanted to call friends and neighbors that the war was over."

Do you remember who told you it was over?

"I don't remember who told me. I heard people screaming and I knew something was wrong. I listened in on the line and people said, "The war is over, the war is over!" They said, "Call so and so, ring them for me!" I only had two hands. The board was lit up everywhere. Everybody was ringing. It was kind of scary."

How did you feel when you found out the war was over?

"I was relieved but I was just wondering how many lives were lost and had friends had sons who would never come home again. One time I had to answer a call. It was the Red Cross calling a family to tell them that their son had been killed. That was right after the war was over. I thought they should have went to the house, but they called and told the man over the phone and he told his wife. It was kind of emotional for me because I knew the people and they had only one son; he was killed in action. I'm not sure what battle he was killed in. It was sort of sad."

Do you remember the war bond drives?

"Yeah, we purchased several. Of course we cashed them later, but I think my husband purchased a bond a month. A 25 dollar or 50 dollar one, but I'm not sure. But we kept them a long time. It helped, I guess, the finances of the government for us to buy the bonds."

Can you describe any instances that you remember?

"Not really. The only thing I can tell you is that I worked the switchboard during a lot of heartache. The boys would call back home and tell their mothers or their wives that they were goin' overseas. That was an experience. They had to tell 'em goodbye and sometimes they weren't sure they would come back. It was pretty serious and they'd have to call their wives to tell 'em they were leaving to go wherever. Some of 'em had to go to Germany, some had to go to Berlin, some had to go to Frankfurt, Germany. Now, my son Bill, after the war, he had to drive a Jeep. They had to protect the land. He drove a Jeep down these fences with a machine gun for fear somebody would start something again. That was a long time after the war...'53 I think. He was over there four years in Germany. He wasn't there all four years, he was there about three. I don't think he had serious duties."

Ruth Lafferty was 36 years old during World War 2 and worked as a housewife.

Could you describe what you did during the war?

"I was a housewife with three children; 10, 7 and a few months old."

Can you describe how you took care of your children during the war?

"Well, as any mother would, I fed them the best I could and I just took good care of them. Kept them in school."

Can you describe how items were rationed?

"We had stamps for shoes, sugar and food. You had to plan your menus according to the number of stamps you had and what you could buy with them. Sugar, you had to stand in line for that. Shoes were the main thing if you had growing children because they could go through them so fast and they weren't made of leather and good stuff that they are now. If you had senior members in the family they would collect their shoe stamps and give them to the family members that had children so they could get shoes for their children. And if you had growing boys that was quite an item to take care of."

Where did you go to get these ration stamps?

"That I have forgotten."

Do you remember about the distribution of the stamps? Were there always enough stamps?

"As far as I know there were enough stamps. I don't recall any trouble getting what we needed and gasoline stamps, that was a real problem for people that had to use their car for work."

Did your family have a car?

"We had a car and it was an old broken down car. At that time because you couldn't buy a car at that time."

Did you travel very often?

"No, no, not at all. Not at all."

Do you recall any black marketing of the rationing?

"I had heard of it but I didn't know of any black marketing myself."

How was it determined how many stamps you got?

"The number in the family. The father and the mother got so many and then each child got so many."

Did it depend on the age of the children?

"No, no."

Could you describe your impressions of the enemy during the war?

"Well, I think pure hatred of the enemy. You knew you had them and you just kept on fighting and id what you could."

Could you explain how the war affected you family life?

"I don't think it affected our family life much at all. My husband was employed the whole time except watching what you had to...what stamps you had to work with."

What was the atmosphere like at home?

"Well, it was very normal in our house. I don't know about others but ours was very normal, tense of course, but when the war was going on everybody was tense. Considering what was going to happen but as far as our life it was very normal."

Did you have any relatives in the war?

"Yes, I had a brother that enlisted when he was 39 years old in the Seabees and he was there on the seize of Guadalcanal and then he went in on the first wave of the battle of Okinawa."

Could you explain what the Seabees were?

"The Seabees enlisted. They were craftsmen. My brother was an electrician, some were carpenters. But whatever trade they have, they went in because they could help the army or the services with the skills they had, there were a brand of the Navy."

Explain how having your brother in the war affected your life?

"Well, the fear that he might not come back. The long anticipation of the letters. Waiting for the letters to come through and some things cut out of them. He said things he wasn't allowed to say and so they cut those out of there."

Can you tell how your family supported the war by recycling?

"We saved any can. You had to cut the bottoms and tops out of them and smash them and put them in a box and put them out on the curb and also all the grease had to be saved. They used those for ammunition and then a lot of times for soap, made soap out of it."

Is there anything else you can remember that you saved or did to support the war effort?

"We didn't have a garden but a lot of people had them. They laid acres and each person was allotted a certain amount to farm and take care of. They were quite a big thing at that time to keep people supplied with food. I was lucky, my brother had a farm and they always had a big garden. We could go out there and get what we wanted. But meat was rationed. Oh, that was bad. You had to watch those stamps."

What do you recall about civil defense?

"I don't remember too much. I knew they had them but I don't remember too much about them."

Do you remember where you were or what you were doing when America dropped the A-Bomb on Hiroshima?

"I thought it was sad, but it had to be used. I trusted Truman's judgement in using it. I hated to think of the people killed and the damage done but I was glad something was going to put a stop to it."

Did you support the war bonds?

"I couldn't personally buy them, but I thought it was great that people could and they did."

Did you know anyone who bought them?

"Oh, yes. I had a lot of friends that bought them."

Are there any other unique experiences or memories that you can think of?

"Well, perhaps not so unique. My daughter was talking, she has a memory that encompasses all. She remembered the farmers getting tires so bad that they wouldn't hold air so they stuffed them with wheat and then they could keep on working. And she also remembers the people driving on the rims of cars. Now she was 7-10 years old. I don't remember that but people drove on the rims because there was no other way to go and we were talking about her bicycle. You couldn't buy a bicycle during the war then. You just couldn't buy them and that's what we did and I think I was so busy at that time. I don't remember a lot of things."

Do you recall the war adding any extra pressure with you having to raise three children, any extra hardships?

"No, no hardships. It was hard to get shoes. It was hard to get these things but you did it, you did it willingly."

Do you know of any other restrictions that the war placed on your family besides you mentioning of the rationing and not being able to get a bicycle?

"No, no I don't."

Is there anything else you would like to add?

"Has anyone told you about the contest ladies from the Red Cross? They would meet the troop trains when they came through Muncie. Of course, trains were the transportation method so all day long troop trains were coming through and they would meet them down at the station and they would have coffee and donuts and sandwiches and candies and cigarettes and everything for their comfort to give them there at the station and I had a neighbor that did that all the time."

Were they just volunteers?

"Yes, they were just volunteers for the Red Cross. That's about all the volunteer work that I can think of."

Is there anything else you would like to add?

"Well, my daughter also mentioned, "Mother, do you remember that you couldn't buy a rubber ball any place?". She said we happened to have some and we could play with ours but you couldn't buy them. Rubber was restricted to go into tires and stuff like that. I was there during the war but I don't know how much I let pass over my head."

Could you describe more the V-mail?

"It was all on this air-mail tissue-like paper and my brother was in the South Pacific all the time and it would come and he would be telling about what he was doing and anything pertaining to anything about their maneuvers were cut out. You had to rather guess what they were saying to you. But in one letter he said, he was in Guadal Canal seize. He wasn't in the first wave that went but when he did go in he said it was so horrible they were cut off completely with supplies. The ships couldn't get...couldn't bring them supplies. They had nothing to eat and he said when you were desperate enough you would eat anything. They ate parrots. They ate monkeys. They ate snakes. They were finally able to secure the canal. He was an electrician and he said he never got to handle anything electrical the time he was in. It was just helping out. He then got down sick and they sent him home."

When you sent letters over there did they inspect those too?

"I don't know. I suppose they did but he never said."

Did you send him boxes?

"Oh, by the time they got there they didn't amount to much."

Can you describe how you felt when your brother came home?

"Oh, I didn't see him at once because he lived in Oklahoma but when I did he was so thin and pitiful looking but I was overjoyed to think that he made it through and got home. He was telling about one time that there was a big safe the Japanese left on the island and they wanted to find out what was in it so one the men, a demolition expert, he put some dynamite under it and blew it up and it was filled with jewelry, beautiful jewelry. But it went in every direction."

Did they know where it came from?

"I don't know that they did. His big experience was leaving the east coast and going clear down the Panama Canal. He said if he weren't married he wouldn't come back. He would stay on the sea all his life. He said you just had to go through the canal to experience it."

Lena Jane Lawson was age 35 when World War 2 started. After the war, she was a teacher in the Muncie Community Schools and has been retired for several years.

How old were you during the war?

"When it started, I was 35."

What types of activities were you involved in?

"During that time, I was substituting, and my children were little, so I only substituted. I didn't go back to full-time teaching until '45....1945."

And did you do anything with your leisure time that you can remember?

"I was interested in a library, we lived in the little town of Gaston, and books were a scarce commodity at that time, and I worked for that and then I had three small children and I still taught Sunday School at that time, so I was pretty busy."

What do you remember about rationing?

"You had to learn to manage, and you had to think ahead, and you didn't just use up all the supplies you had and complain, you learned to manage."

How many stamps did you get?

"As I remember, we received 10 stamps a month, and sugar was a commodity that was rationed, that more people talked about. For some reason, we seemed to manage and didn't really complain about it in our family."

On what types of items did they put these rationing restrictions?

"Sugar was one of the main ones that I recall and sometimes, some meat was scarce, and there would be times when we couldn't get vegetables -- fresh vegetables especially. It would be a day or two but then we would have plenty."

Where did you get these stamps?

"The government supplied them, and you know, I cannot recall how they got them to the individuals."

Were you affected by this rationing, like in gas?

"Yes...yes, gasoline was rationed, and you could only have so many gallons per mile. And we had moved here from another state, and of course, during that time we couldn't accumulate enough stamps to go back home. We just managed -- we knew that's the way it was, and we accepted it and went on."

Were you allowed to save stamps from other months?

"That I don't recall. I'm sorry, there are certain details I don't remember."

Do you know how it was determined what stamps you got?

"It depended on the number in the family."

What were your impressions of the enemy?

"My first impression was hearing Hitler on the radio, and he would just scream and yell, and of course, all they had was the radio, we hadn't ever heard of television, and then he'd have an interpreter, and he'd say all of these awful things about other people and I'd wonder what they were doing to him to make him act like that. And as time went on, we began to learn something about how wicked he really was. And then I shall never forget the morning of December 7th, let's see, 1941. We had been to church, we went home and turned on the radio, and the first words we heard were "Pearl Harbor has been bombed." Well, we didn't know where Pearl Harbor was...people didn't travel as much, and we were having the minister and his wife to dinner that day, and I remember seeing that man sit there and shake his head."

Do you remember what you were doing when you found out that they had dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?

"No, I don't recall what I was doing. I remember the report on the day it happened. I got cold chills...I recall. "Where will it be dropped next?"...kept popping into my mind."

What about when you learned of the end of the war?

"Well, it came as sort of a gradual thing for three or four...maybe about a week. This one country would surrender or "put up the white flag" so to speak, and then another, and then another, and then another, and finally there was the pronouncement that Japan had surrendered, and of course by that time, Hitler had...it was assumed...he had committed suicide. But the building where he...according to reporters, was burned."

Explain how the war affected your life.

"Sadness, and seeing friends and relatives go to war that didn't want to, and our second-door neighbor boy was killed, and a lot of things like that."

So you had relatives in the war then?

"No, I didn't. There were more girls in my family and my husband was too old for the draft."

Did you participate in the war bond drives at all?

"Yes, and we had some for our children."

Could you explain what these were?

"I usually bought twenty-five dollar bonds. I think it was sixteen dollars, and it runs in my mind maybe seventy-five cents you'd pay for it, and when it matured it was worth twenty-five dollars, and you could buy them like that."

Describe any unique experiences on the homefront.

"I remember flags being flown in our church where I go now. In 1943, we went to the same church and there would be these cards with the names of all the people who were enlisted or who were drafted. Now see, when the war broke out, we didn't have soldiers, and immediately when the president declared war on Japan, they had to start drafting men, and the draft was quite an issue when it came up, and everyone a certain age had to go and register for this sort of thing. Well, they didn't have camps or training facilities, and they built several across the United States, and one I knew about in particular is Ft. Leonard Wood in Missouri, 'cause that's my home state and it's close to where I grew up, and it is still there and very active."

In what ways did ordinary people support the war effort?

"They cooperated with the rationing and people who could knit, would knit socks and gloves, and of course, we mentioned the war bonds. And if something came up or a need was someplace, if the individual couldn't do it, there would be several individuals."

Was there a big emphasis on recycling?

"Not so much that I recall now. Once in a while there would be some...because we didn't have the materials then that we have now, and that made a world of difference."

Do you remember participating in victory gardens?

"Oh yes, we had one. Most of the people in our town had one. People in larger cities did too. And if you had more than you could use, you shared it with someone that didn't have. I canned over 400 quarts of canned stuff each year."

What were the victory gardens like?

"Well, just a regular garden like what we have today, only they called it a victory garden because food stuff was scarce. And you'd get the seeds and people would plant them in the ground, and you didn't have to go to the store then to buy it."

Were these efforts done more out of patriotism?

"It probably was. It was a patriotic thing to do, not only that...uh...it was a Christian act. That was included. It was our moral duty, our religious duty, and if you want to use government, just....everybody was working together."

Do you remember your church doing special things?

"Not any big projects that I can recall. We were living in a little town and driving into Muncie, and I know more about what they did out in the country than did here."

Did the major corporations do anything?

"Yes, we often read of their support and wanting people to buy government bonds and even helped with the victory gardens or things like that."

Maxine Owens was 23 during World War 2 and was a housewife raising children. She is retired and lives at Muncie Health Care Center.

Describe what you did during the war.

"I stayed at home and took care of the family. My husband worked in a factory. We just kept the home fire burning. He worked at Acme-Lee."

Do you know anything of what your husband did at work?

"Not really."

Do you know anything of rationing?

"Well, soap...and we rationed sugar, gasoline, cigarettes and coffee."

What were the rationing stamps?

"Well, they were a tiny little stamp smaller than a postage stamp. Some of them had cannons on them and pictures of this type. You had to give one when you bought that article, and if you went anywhere you'd better take them with you or you might not get anything to eat. Meat was rationed too."

Where did you get the rationing stamps?

"We had to go and sign up for them at the courthouse as I remember."

Do you remember any black marketing of the rationing stamps?

"None."

How was it determined how many stamps you were to receive?

"Well, it came out in the paper according to your family size. I had three children at that time. The older boy and then the twins; the youngest one wasn't here at that time.

But you'd better ask me what I was doing when we heard the war had begun. I was in Indianapolis visiting with my mother-in-law. My children were playing around, and a neighbor came bursting in the room and she said, "They just bombed Pearl Harbor!" So that's where I was at the beginning."

Describe your impressions of the enemy during the war.

"I don't have a very good impression of them."

Could you explain how the war affected your family life?

"Well, we lived out east of town, and of course, gas rationing...you had to go back and forth to work. I walked home. We had blackouts and things like that. One night we had a blackout and I was behind the couch with my head down in the register trying to find a pair of earrings that I had dropped."

Do you remember anything how the children were affected by the war?

"None at all. They were all too little."

Did you have any relatives in the war?

"Yes, my stepbrother and my husband's stepbrother were both in there and my husband had two first cousins that were killed. I had a cousin in India...while his mother presented him with a new baby brother. There were no children between -- about twenty years apart. That one boy is now in Alaska. He's a graduate of the University of Alaska."

What were some ways that having family in the war affected your home life?

"Well, worry...a lot of worry. My stepbrother was at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese bombed. He was a shore-gunner. He was on leave and was over into the city at the time. The person who took his place was killed. From then on, he was in the South Pacific most all the time.

At one time, a tree fell on his chest. The Japs came through right behind that and they thought he was dead. He would have been bayonetted, but he just pretended he was gone."

Do you recall what exactly a shore-gunner did?

"No, he never told me that."

Can you describe the ways in which ordinary people supported the war effort?

"For one thing, we saved all of our fat that we had to cook with. We'd strain it and put it in cans and keep it, and save it to the last dish. On the days that things were rationed, of course you couldn't go in and buy anything without your rationing stamps. I had traded in a store on East Jackson Street, and they knew me well enough...you know as a customer, that when I'd go in there'd usually be a sack or two underneath the counter of something that was rationed that I didn't have to give rationing stamps for. It would be soap, cigarettes...which my husband smoked, and little things like that, that you couldn't just go out and buy....or maybe a pound of sugar. They kinda looked out for their own. It was appreciated."

Do you remember anything about victory gardens?

"Victory gardens? Oh, yes. Acme-Lee had several places in the lots next to 8th and Batavia. They plotted off certain little areas and each one had a garden. We had one too."

What was the purpose of the gardens?

"So everybody had something to eat. It was expensive to try to buy."

The dropping of the "A" bomb on Hiroshima; do you remember what you were doing and your feelings about it?

"I can't remember exactly that. I remember that it was a mixture of happiness and sorrow. I felt so sorry for the people, and yet, I knew something like that had to come. It was not a happy day."

Do you remember what you were doing at the end of the war?

"My neighbors had gone on a little vacation and they asked me if I would milk the cows. Well, they had an electric milker...I said yes, I'd milk the cows for them. So I was over there milking the cows and the lights went out because we had a terrible storm. Oh it rained and the streets were flooded. You couldn't get through. There I sat, trying to milk cows by hand. Their son-in-law came in and he gave me a hand. But I was milking cows and the all clear signal came. You could hear people were riding on the fenders of the cars and through water up as high as the door. It was quite a day."

To what extent did you participate in the war bond drive?

"We bought bonds regularly. I think we bought one about every month."

Do you remember what size denominations?

"We bought the $50 ones. When the war was over we traded them in. We bought a new living room outfit. I remember that."

Are there any unique experiences that stand out in your mind?

"My brother came home from Pearl Harbor. We had company that night. I had been ill...I fainted and fell across the table. That's about the worst thing I can think of. I was so happy to see him. He and I were more or less raised together. His mother had taken care of me when I was born. So I had just always known this family.

Then my dad married into them. I always thought an awful lot of Bill and he is still alive. After he came home he had a laryngectomy one way and then they turned around and did it the other way. He's still around. He can't turn his head and he can't talk, but he's still Bill. The other brother jumped off an airplane and he landed on a haystack and underneath it was a cannon, or some sort of a gun. That wasn't such and easy place to be. Those things happen. When Bill came home we were so happy. When Fred came home, that was the one that sent all the memorobilia...when he came home we were happy to see him too. I had lived in Indiana when I first knew Fred. His dad was married to my mother-in-law and we got to be real good friends, and we wrote all during the war. I don't know where he is now. Several years ago, before my husband passed on, a man came to our door and asked, "Are you Wayne Owens?", my husband said, "Yes." He said, "We're looking for Fred Endicott, do you know Fred Endicott?"..."Yes", I said, "He's my stepbrother." "Could I talk to ya for a while?", the man said. He came in and we were so excited that we didn't have sense enough to ask him for his credentials. He asked questions that were rather personal. "Do you think of him as a friend or a brother or relative or what do you think of Fred?" We finally asked, "what's this all about anyway?" The man said, "Well, I'll tell ya, you get a word here and a word there and you get a pretty good picture of a man." That's all we ever heard, we never heard from Fred again. I didn't know. I rather imagine he isn't alive...he was a year older than my husband...83 March...same day."

Do you recall any war camps?

"I know one man that was a prisoner of war...his name was Morris Terry. He finally escaped and came back home."

Do you recall anything about block wardens?

"Mr. Sipes...he was in charge of mock drills and things like that. He would say, "Out with the lights" if it was on. He was Johnny-On-The-Spot...he was right there."

Did people think they were going to be bombed?

"No, I don't think that was it. I think the idea was being prepared and knowing what to do. They had the lights in the factories turned out. You couldn't light a cigarette or anything outside. If you lit a pipe, you had to hold it upside-down so the fire wouldn't show. Dress material was almost impossible to get. But I could sew, and I needed a dress. They happened to have a sale on print material at Penney's and I think it was three yards for a dollar. You could buy ten yards. I was ill as usual and my husband said he'd go and see what he could find. Well, he brought back ten yards of the most horrible looking yellow material that I'd ever seen. I smiled and said, "Thank you, Dear." You took what you could get."

Walt Robinson was in his early teens during World War 2 and attended school. He is currently a counselor at Muncie Southside High School.

During the war, what did you do to occupy yourself?

"Being from 12-16, life wasn't that much different than what it is today, with the exception of the automobile, because we had rationing of gasoline and all this type of thing. But I was basically occupied in school."

What school did you go to?

"I'm a "Muncie-ite" I guess you'd say. So, I was a southsider...Garfield, Wilson, Central and Ball State."

Could you explain rationing?

"Well, certain articles were in short supply, I don't think the gasoline was in such short supply as rubber for the tires, so they had a speed limit of I think 35 MPH, and that's as fast as you were permitted to go by law, which was used to conserve the rubber on tires. Now, you were only allowed stamps for one vehicle, I think that was per family. Now my father was in the construction business, and he traveled various places because of his work, so he was given a "C Ticket", which was a good one 'cause he got extra gas. You'll notice, we talked out the black market, so what would take place at times...people that didn't use all of their tickets would sell them to someone for money. They actually cost no money at all, they were just granted to you because you were allotted "x" number of gallons."

Was it illegal?

"Yes! You were to turn them back in if they were not used. Most people didn't. I don't recall my father turning any back in, if he gave them to anyone, I wasn't aware of it. I have an older brother, he was 2 years older, he started driving you see, when the was still on. You see, I told Mr. Siler the interesting thing is, V-J Day he was inducted into the Navy. He was taking his physical exam when it was announced that V-J Day had occurred."

Was anything else rationed?

"Oh yeah, canned goods...which I liked fruit cocktail, and my mother more or less told me, we had other things we had to buy other than fruit cocktail. And shoes, meat...that was the one my mother had the most difficulty with, because we had a grocery store in almost every corner of Muncie, and we had our little family grocery that we'd go to and we were always at least a week or a month into next week's stamps. The guy, somehow he could cover his sales to our family, and I know he was doing it illegally...a little bit of underhand stuff...but yet it was still done."

Did you pay with the stamps, or did you just present them?

"Yes, you just handed the stamps along with the...instead of getting green stamps back, you were giving stamps with the money. They had an office in town, I don't recall, probably the courthouse or some such place, where you'd go to pick up the stamps, or they'd mail them to you, I don't recall which."

How was distribution determined?

"Size of family on meat and shoes. Then on gasoline, it was your occupation. Of course they asked for pooling...motor pooling...to take place. And tires I think were rationed, but I don't recall what."

You talked about the speed limit, did that include the highway?

"Oh yes, that was the highway. In town, of course, it was 30 or 25. But, if you were traveling on the highway, 35 was the maximum you could go."

Did they ration school materials?

"No."

What about school lunches?

"At Wilson, I remember, I ate in the cafeteria. Elementary, you had a long hour and you went home for lunch. We had the neighborhood schools at that time. When I went to Central, I felt like I was an adult...I ate out at the YMCA I think. Five days a week for three years; they had a school cafeteria, but I did not eat there."

What were your impressions of the enemy?

"Well, I think they were described as being monstrous, they killed babies. It's a little bit like you read in history books of World War 1 particularly. I remember stories of when the Germans went through Belgium and slaughtered the children. The Japanese were especially pointed out to be quite inhuman in their treatment, and this was exemplified by comic books and the newspapers. Well, Hitler's regime was probably thought of a little more kindly of than the Japanese. And the Italians were considered somewhat of a joke, but they could kill people as well as any other nation. We did have a prisoner of war camp up in Eaton, Indiana. I think Germans were involved in that, I don't recall any difficulties with escapees. We did have a camp up there."

Did you absorb the propaganda?

"Oh yes, I...as a matter of fact it was carried in my family even later. My cousin, his father, and his brother were in World War 2 fighting in the Pacific. One was in the China-Burma area and the other was in the Pacific. At this time, my father was postmaster of the Army/Air Force, and one of my aunt's grandchildren married a Japanese boy. She never ever got over that. You know how you don't say "Yankee" without "damn"? Well, she doesn't say "Nippon" without saying "damn" Nipponese. And she carried that to her grave."

Were your friends expected to go to war when they were of legal age? Were they ready to go?

"I think so. Maybe it was exemplified in the behavior of the young people. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." I think that loosened things up I guess. I was only 16 when it ended, I didn't really think a whole lot about having to go into the Army of Navy immediately upon my graduation. My brother, he made no plans but to go directly from high school into the service."

How did the war affect you?

"We were very fortunate in two ways. First, my family seemed to be born at the right time because the great conflicts are occurring when we are either too young or too old. The other thing, I have cousins that were in the service. No one was actually wounded or killed, so...I used to see the gold stars in the war which would indicate that they had someone in the family that was killed. Blue stars meant they were in the service, gold stars meant they were killed."

Did your mother work during this period?

"No, my father was a male chauvinist, and he was going to make the money for the family. She went to work at one time, and that lasted for one day. When he came home and found out she had a job, she no longer had a job. Now my brother, even though he was only two years older than I, he did start working in a defensive factory. Duram's was its name, and they made shells and shell casings. And he'd work a shift and I'd say he was between 16 and 17 years of age. Some factories did have youth at this time."

What did your father do?

"He was a painter. He was like a foreman for a general contractor here in town. So, he was painting...oh, Delco-Remy was one of his big jobs. I recall him going to Bedford, Indiana, GM had a plant down there, he did a lot of work for their company."

Were the products war materials?

"No, basically vehicles for the war effort. There were no passenger cars made at all between 1941-1946, but they turned out trucks, of course Delco-Remy was the electronical part of it...they were making ignition systems and this type of thing. Like I said, Duram's made casings; Ball Corporation was going big making glass jars because we were doing a lot of canning the victory gardens on the home front."

What were these victory gardens?

"Uh...just little...kitchen gardens I guess you could say...where you could grow various things that you could use during the year, 'cause you couldn't get alot of canned goods."

Can you explain how ordinary people supported the war effort?

"We did two things that I can remember: the drives...we would have aluminum drives and we would turn in pots and pans and this type of thing. Toothbrush tubes...we'd roll those up. Yeah, we did some paper drives, too. I was a boy scout at that time...and then we had a black-out in Muncie. Now, anyone with any intelligence would be able to figure this out. There was no way the Japanese or the Germans were going to Muncie, Indiana, 'cause you couldn't get here with the range of their Air Force. But we had the black-outs and I was a Boy Scout and I was helping in a neighborhood, we'd run around and very officially tell those people to douse those lights because we don't want the enemy to see us."

How vividly do you remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

"I had been at a movie on that particular day...it was Sunday...and I remember seeing the movie. It was one of those films...musical...about the Navy, and I was kind of shocked because I had just looked at...The Chicago Tribune in those days used to run pictures showing the ships and the armies of various countries and I said "these people are our friends" and it was a shock that anyone dared to attack the United States. I just couldn't imagine it. I never realized just how serious we were damaged at Pearl Harbor...shocking."

What about when the atomic bomb had been dropped?

"No, I don't. That does not make the impact in my mind that say V-J day or V-E day or that type of thing. I am a History major in college, but Harry Truman did truly great things as a president, and I think that he'll go down in history as a great president. He dropped the "A-Bomb", he fired MacArthur, and he called his clean-up plan the Marshall plan, and many presidents would have called it the Truman plan. I thought those were three things...I thought we were going to lose a lot of men if we invaded Japan, so we killed a lot of Japanese, but they were the enemy at that time, so I justify it even today that it was necessary."

How about when the war was over?

"At being 16 years old, it didn't soak in just how terrible everything was. I guess I was pleased that my brother wasn't going to go into combat. He did win a combat medal because he swept mines in the Sea of Japan. It was rather dangerous work in those days."

How did you feel when your relatives came home?

"We kept them because these two cousins, one was about my size at the time...he tried to join the Air Force, but they told him to go home, drink milk, and eat bananas. Well, he wanted to be a belly gutter, but unfortunately, he didn't make it, 'cause your life expectancy wasn't that long. He got sent to the Pacific instead of the European theater because that 8th Air Force took a lot of casualties. I was just happy to see him. We became sort of a second family for them and they really never forgave their parents for it. My uncle was somewhat of a nut I guess, he wanted to get back into it."

Do you remember the war bond drives?

"Again, the scouts...we were always available to be ushers. Abbott and Costello came to Muncie...they put on their "Who's on First?" routine. I just thought that was the greatest thing. The war bonds, they started out as saving bonds about 1940. The cheap bonds were $18.75 and in ten years, they became $25.00...so that was three or four percent interest. And they would sell stamps...I think they were 25 cents a stamp and you'd build it up to $18.75, and then you bought the bond. It's just been very lately that they stopped drawing interest on the original series E bond. My father-in-law, he had some that were worth over $40.00 I recall...all those years they had built up."

What was the most memorable thing that happened to you?

"That's hard to answer. Two things occurred. Some colonel had to fly so often to build up his flight time...he got paid extra...he crashed a DC-3 up by Redkey. I remember going up and looking at the wreckage, and I can't recall whether he was killed or not. Another time, there was a P-47...a fighter...he developed an oil leak and he landed at Muncie airport. Of course, we ran out there to see this. When he got it fixed and took off, he buzzed the field, and boy was that something to see...so that type of thing."

Was there a lot of poverty in Muncie?

"Well, it was a time of pretty full employment. If you wanted a job, there wasn't much problem getting one."

When did you decide we were going to win?

"Oh, I never doubted it."

Doris Faulkner Stewart was 17 when World War 2 began and was a college student. She is currently the Supervisor of Fine Arts for the Muncie Community Schools.

Can you describe what you did during the war?

"I was in school. I was at Ball State University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in music education. I remember walking across the campus the day we declared war, after we were attacked. I was entering the Arts Building when another student came and told me the President had declared war. I remember shedding some tears."

What kind of leisure activities did you do?

"I've always...during that time I was playing in the college orchestra and playing in the college choirs. And I was playing at my church. I will say that when the war...and more and more men were called up...that we young women took on more responsibilities because the men were gone. The campus became almost a void of young men."

Could you explain what rationing stamps were?

"Oh yes, I don't remember all of the things that were rationed but I remember that my boyfriend, that later became my husband, being called to service. And he gave me his shoe stamps because the rubber was going for the tires and things for the armed forces. So we wore these horrible dirty saddle shoes. But you had to have a stamp to get shoes, and we had those horrible brown shoes. But we wore them. Sugar was rationed, and I can't remember what else. But if you had a friend that worked in the department stores, when the nylons came in usually there was an extra pair under the counter for the people she liked, and I made her my friend."

Do you remember where you got the stamps?

"No, I really do not remember."

Do you remember anything of the black marketing of the stamps?

"Yes, but I came from a home that was well disciplined, and my parents were hard working average people. I don't think if you had paid my father money he would not have done it. I came from a very strict christian home. I think I'm the better for it, and we were church going people, we loved it, and our lives centered around it. Among our church, school, and home; that was our life. So consequently, my mother and father would not have purchased anything on the black market."

Do you think there was a lot of it?

"I think there were those people who abused it. And you hear about it today...with the war effort. [Persian Gulf War] There are always those who want to make money off of human needs. I really don't think my parents ever participated in it."

Can you describe your impressions of the enemy?

"I disliked them intensely. I have the same loyalties no matter what our problems have been in this country. And I am part of a minority group so I certainly felt the sting of racism while I was in school. I remember distinctly being refused to play in a quartet because the professor could not picture a black girl in a Polish outfit playing. So I experienced racism during that time, however, my loyalties to my country have always been strong. So I actually, like many people, didn't care for the Japanese."

As the war went on, did your impression change at all?

"Well, I'm not sure. I think being a college student, I tried to be rational. But the intensity in the country, and the fever, and the loyalty for the troops was intense. The attack on the country, Pearl Harbor, for those of us who were living at the time, it was one of the most horrible things that ever happened."

Can you explain how the war directly affected your life?

"Well, my boyfriend was drafted. He was a funeral director. For quite a while, before he was called into service he was deferred. I remember a number of things for young men in the service. We went to parties and they were heavily chaperoned. I think the young people today, they wouldn't think they could have any fun. But we were heavily chaperoned, that was just the way we lived but all our parents and the people that ran the parties were there. And so therefore we danced with them and tried to entertain those young men as best we could because they were away from home. They were lonely and most people were trying to do those kinds of things but I am saying they were heavily chaperoned."

Did you send boxes overseas?

"No, I didn't. I sent boxes to my boyfriend. Usually the boxes contained small things that might please him, candy, cookies, that kind of thing."

Where was your boyfriend stationed?

"Camp Lee, Virginia. I'll give you another example of bias, because it [the incident] was not true. Now we were told and those things you can never prove...but they were not to keen on too many blacks in the Navy. At that time, my boyfriend and future husband wanted to go to the Navy and so he called me after he had been inducted and said, "You'll never believe it, but I am quarantined at Camp Lee, Virginia." I said, "Quarantined? For what?" He said, "A number of young blacks here, they are saying are quarantined for suspicion of venereal disease." I said, "You have got to be kidding." Three days later, those same men were released and diverted to the Army. Now that's all I can tell you but it did happen and I know because we lived through it."

Do you remember the "Double V Concept"?

"No, I do not. But I am an avid supporter of Martin Luther King after the war."

How did your boyfriend and future husband affect you by being in the war?

"Well, he didn't fight overseas but he always was ambitious, dedicated, and a good worker so he progressed and he ended up, strangely enough Ed was going to be shipped overseas the next week and the Lieutenant came to him and said, "Faulkner, how would you like to stay on this side, because you are a good leader and I'd like for you to stay here and train recruits." So they snatched him out and he stayed in this country and trained recruits."

Can you describe how ordinary people contributed to the war effort?

"Ordinary people did so much. When you have a war like World War 2, it permeates throughout the lives of all the people. I personally don't think there could be anyone living at that time that couldn't have been affected by the war in some way. The industries changed, they immediately geared for war and some people made a lot of money during that time. Many people actually got their start because they got into war industries and worked in the factories. You know they made good wages and it helped many people in those ways."

Did you, yourself, take part in victory gardens?

"No, but I know people in our church who did. I've never been much of an outdoorsy person. I've always been around a keyboard."

Did your church organize functions such as recycling for the war effort?

"Not really, I cannot remember that but our church, the Shaffer Chapel AME Church at that time. But they did the things that they could do on the local level for people. But they weren't that much into recycling like today because of our commitment to the environment. I think maybe that there were not that many concerns as there are now."

Can you describe what you were doing when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

"I was in Central High School when I heard about the attack and at that time, I remember being very upset and we were geared to the radio not the TV screen and all of us were glued to the radio to get all the news. I'm not sure that, that wasn't very good because when you are listening and it's auditory and not always visual; you think and the imagination is allowed to run free and so we survived with the radio."

Do you remember what you were doing when you heard about the dropping of the A-Bomb on Hiroshima?

"No, I don't remember what I was doing. I remember being shocked at the horror of it; however, I like many Americans felt after we knew about the Japanese dive bombers, the suicide planes...Kamikazi...what they did to our ships and how many of our men were killed innocently, and I felt they started it and so much as I abhorred the fact that kind of devastation can take place, I felt like many Americans that they got...I hate to say it but... they got what they deserved because they started it and we didn't. And I had that kind of feeling like most people did."

Can you describe your feelings when you heard about the end of the war?

"I was very happy. Number one, I knew my husband would come home because we got married during the war years, and my husband was in uniform when we got married."

Was there alot of partying on the street and parades?

"Well, the people were very jubliant. That's the best I can say. Of course, with me I can say with most of us, we were plain thankful. Not so much celebrating but thanking the good Lord that the people killing each other was over."

Did you participate in war bond drives?

"Some, I helped some. I can't remember exactly what I did, but I do remember that some of the drives that we did have. Participating in music, you do a little bit of everything. But I don't remember precisely what we did."

Can you describe any unique experiences on the home front?

"No, frankly, I think most of us wanted to forget as much as we could and since I was not directly involved in the service, most of us wanted to get back to living normally. The things we had to go without during the war we justed wanted to get back to normal."

Can you describe any of the segregation of blacks during the war?

"Yes, there were segregated units during the war and as I cited the example of my husband's experience that was a personal thing with us. Uh...when there men...not only him but other black men. The maneuvering of the bias system to get them where they wanted them rather than giving them an equal opportunity. And at Camp Lee, Virginia, that was in the South where he was stationed and of course the bias around there. Coming from the North, I had no more sense than to walk up to anybody in the dime store, and I wondered why the people were so cool. I'm accustomed to talking so freely to people and being nice, you know. But I suppose the little ignorant clerk behind the counter, and I'm calling her how I felt she was, thought, I was...how dare this negro be so forward, but this negro has always felt that one person is as good as another. It depends on what you do in this world, not your color."

Is there any other experiences on the home front you would like to share with us?

"No, not really, but I suppose the prejudice of the Army at that time because we felt it. Now I'm saying that the Armed Forces was very good for some of those men, black and white. I really think they got a lot of help. Some got their education through it and got through school after the war. But I had a very difficult time understanding why on earth, it took me years to understand why the Japanese were like they were. I didn't really understand this until I saw other countries and other leaders and say this same kind of nationalism that made people want to conquer and to get other people under their control."

Wayne Watman was in his early 20's during World War 2 and worked on the Pennsylvania railroad. He is currently retired and lives in Muncie.

How old were you during World War 2?

"Um...20."

Describe what you did during the war.

"Well, I worked the Perfect Circle. An apprentice boy, for the first year of the war, 1939-40, '41 the war really started (that's when the United States got involved) and that's when I went to work at the Pennsylvania Railroad....as a fireman...that was in February, 1941 and I stayed there all through the war years until I quit in 1949. But, it was my job and when I was hired as a fireman, we had to train to fire the engine and run it. After 3 years you qualified as an engineer and you were allowed to run but you had to take a first, second, and third year exam. It was tough, it wasn't nothing easy. Then once you passed out, you were capable of running an engine, then we all ran war materials through the war. That's the primary job of the railroad and the railroad I worked for, the Pennsylvania Pan-Handle Division, ran more war materials than any other railroad in the world, maybe other than Germany. Pennsylvania was one of the leading railroads in the United States that hauled war materials during the war."

Could you describe what ways your job benefitted the war? Could you elaborate on what you took?

"Well, most of our hauling would be hauling equipment and supplies and ammunition supplies was about the extent of it. We transported an awful lot of troops. We had what we call troop trains, which was passengers. Then we had freight trains, which was war materials, tanks, guns, and automobiles. Clothing, you name it, we transported it. We hauled from Logansport to Indianapolis to Columbus. When you explain that, you have to know how the railroad is set up. When I say our Division was from Logansport to Cincinnati and Columbus to Indianapolis that was the old Columbus Division, which was part of the Pan-Handle. That's where most of the supplies came from. This area of the country, right through here, was one of the leading areas in building war materials. Right through this part of the country....Muncie, Richmond, and Middletown which used to be a big steel industry years ago, quite a supplier of metal and steel, particularly tank shields, heavy armor that went around the tanks. A lot of this war material was made right dwon around Middletown, Ohio, which a lot of people didn't know. And then their was Warner Gear, they supplied a lot transmissions and (trying to recall right off the top of my head), a lot of supplies for guns, gun parts.

Crosby Manufacturing in Richmond, at that time, they made a machine gun clip, they started off with a small car but the government did not buy it so they went into this machine gun clip and parts for the machine gun through the war years. Of course in Indianapolis, we had Allison's Division, which was aircraft engines. We all run those. Logansport was just a rail center. They had some industry there, but most of it was rail center. Richmond, Indiana, there the old National Automatic Company, which they in turn made a lot of machinery that was sold to other companies that made war materials that was a large industry at that time. Wayne Works, they made ambulances and we hauled those on flat cars, box cars; however they could get them out of Richmond. But the Wayne Works mad a lot of products for the government and most of the work was ambulance work that they made for the front and different forts. We didn't, in these parts of the county. I can't recall, we didn't have any ammunition factories, that I can recall. The two closest to us...one was in Sullivan County, north of Terre Haute and the other was down in Charleston, Indiana, and then we had the naval, the Naval Training Grounds. We would get stuff and then we would haul it east to the coast out the Atlantic Ocean then it goes over to Europe. Then out of Charleston, we didn't haul that much out of Charleston, that was a big ammunition depot down there, one of the largest in the country, we didn't haul much out of there. That went across the southern railroads. They hauled alot of those."

Did you know anything about rationing stamps?

"Oh, yes! That was quite a thing. If I can recall, in your car you had an A, B, C. If you got an A ration stamp, you only were allowed a couple of gallons a week. If you got a B...I hope I got these right for you...but a B, I think you were allowed 10 gallons. Then if you had a C stamp and something else went with that stamp, but you could get all the gas you needed to go to and from work. You were in a critical defense situation where you could get you fuel and go. Then the farmer's stamp, and I can't recall what off the top of my head what letter that stamp was, but they could get this tractor-lean which was a lower octane gas and they could get all the fuel they wanted to run their farm, but they had an unlimited supply of stamps on that one."

Did you get any of these stamps?

"No, at that time I did not own an auto, so I did not have any, but my dad had a C stamp because he worked at the Chrysler Corporation and he was in a critical situation where he had to get to and from work at any time so he could get most of the fuel he wanted and then we lived on a farm and we got the stamp for the tractor fuel, tractor-lean we called it. You run tractors with it. Now he wasn't supposed to use this in your car, but occasionally he did. Most of them would anyhow, but dad was pretty patriotic. He wouldn't let us boys burn that fuel; of course, at that time I had five brothers in the service but me and I was the only one not in and that's how I got up on the railroad. I wasn't healthy enough, I had a hole in my eardrum. They said a sudden concussion would kill you, so I couldn't go in, but I was healthy enough to run a railroad so that's where I stayed."

Describe your impressions of the enemy in World War 2.

"Well, I really wouldn't know how to answer that. I think we all had a great animosity toward them. My greatest tone was the Japanese, I had no use for them at that time, because some of the atrocities they done over in the South Pacific. Although the Germans were just as bad, they had their concentration camps, but we didn't know about these until the end of the war when they had went into the German Nation and found them and this created quite an animosity in the American public. I couldn't condone or feel that a human being would do this to another one whether they liked him or not, whether he was, at that time was a Jewish nation, Germany or whatever the nation had been. I felt it was horrible. It created a hard feeling. But the Japanese, down in the South Pacific, these people were horrible. From the stories that come back and even after the war was over. My brother was down there and he said, let me tell you, he said these guys were cruel, absolutely cruel.

But then you turn around and say well Hitler was cruel. He killed all these Jewish people in their concentration camps and in those ovens. I guess maybe my feelings toward all of them at that time...the leader would have to be sick to do what they done. Even today, the young people read about this but they don't know about it and they can't believe it happened. They think its a story, but it really wasn't a story, it was the truth. My one brother-in-law was there when they went into Dachau and he was one of the first ones in there and he said that all the things that happened to him in the war years, that was the most horrible, where he had the sickest feeling in the whole war was when he went into Dachau and saw what happened. He just couldn't believe it. At times, he said he could not still believe it. He won't talk too much about it. None of the boys that found that part of the country, they don't want to talk about it and ain't going to talk about it. It's something they want to forget. They don't even want to bring it up. They'll tell you funny things that happened but they won't talk about these situations like that. They don't want to talk about it, which I can understand. It's a memory you don't want, but they were there and they had the memory and they keep trying to blank it out.

The Italian people weren't too bad, but they were bad enough, but the worst two were the German nation and the Japanese. And the Japanese, we know prior to World War 2 what they had done to the Chinese nation when they attacked the Chinese nation in the middle 30's...'36,'37,'38...in history. They had overridden that country. They were a horrible group of people. They just didn't mind killing little children, women, nothing. They just cut their heads off. Of course, you read about it in history. You say, well, was it true or not, but you see not only was this history to me, it was real life at that time. We get our news reels back from over there, at that time we didn't have television and all those goodies. But you'd see the news reels and the pictures in the paper and read the accounts in the paper and my God, how could they be that bad, but they were, they were a horrible nation. I think another thing that made the American public so upset with the Japanese nation when they attacked Pearl Harbor, they were shaking hands with our leaders in Washington saying what a good group of people we were at the same time they attacked us, that wasn't a very pleasant thought. Because we had known at that time what Hitler had did to Europe, but we never dreamed it was going to happen to us at that time, we were getting ready to go to war, '39. Some of the plants were changing over to war materials because they were selling it to Brittain and France and some of those countries, kind of a defense move but nothing great. Until we were attacked at Pearl Harbor and then of course, the President declared war on Germany as well, and that's when the nation went into a full-fledged defense program but I think the Japanese were the worst and your animosity towards those people doesn't stop. Even today I don't think we should trust them but I'm one man and that's my opinion."

Explain how the war affected your family life.

"Well, you have the horror of getting that telegram that you had lost a loved one over there but my brother was very fortunate in fact our whole family was very fortunate, we didn't lose anybody over there. We lost some friends but the effects of our living standards were good. We done without, because everybody wanted to help the boys over there. We done without cigarettes, which I didn't smoke at that time. But the ladies had to do without silk hose, we had to do without a lot of meats because everything was rationed but we didn't mind it. It was an effort that everybody pitched in to help, so it was just one big group of people helping everybody else and if your neighbor had sorrow, or if his son was injured or even in death, you went to the family and helped them but it was togetherness in American people we hadn't seen in a long time. They were very compassionate toward each other. I really think standards were good but you didn't try to live good because you felt that if you took something to make yourself pleasurable, one of those boys had to suffer over there. You just didn't do it. When I say my dad was patriotic and the gas stamps before my brothers went and when I was at home. I didn't have a car but we never wasted that gas, in fact, we didn't waste anything. It was just a cardinal sin. You just didn't do it. We were very careful what we talked about and who we talked to. If you got a letter from your loved one over there, you never said too much, except to your immediate family because you didn't know who you were talking to. Kind of quiet mouth, but it was bad. You hated to see your loved ones go, but really the American people didn't suffer any loss like was lost in Europe. We didn't have the loss of the buildings and lives that they had in Europe and the South Pacific. We didn't have it. But we didn't have a bad life, it was bad in the aspect that we were in a war we didn't want but it wasn't too bad."

Describe ways in which ordinary people helped the war effort.

"I think one of the greatest things of how the ordinary person helped the war effort; first, you almost had to be there to understand how fast this nation changed over from peace time goods to war goods. I don't think that ever again in history will we see this done. When we were attacked at Pearl Harbor, we had started at that time, prior to that, to sell some defense goods to Europe. But it was a small amount...I am trying to recall off the top of my head...it seems to me that in less than a year we started supplying the world with war goods, maybe a little longer but the movement of troops on the railroad even when I was at the Perfect Circle. We were developing machinery there at that time. I worked at machinery that you have to understand the old aircraft engines. We were developing this machine to wear this ring in and when we were developing this ring we worked night and day and we didn't say, "Well, it's 8 o'clock. I'm going home. That's not my job. I'm not going to do it." We stayed there until the job was done, because we didn't want these boys to lose their lives anymore than anyone else did. So every little thing we done, we did it the best we could possibly do it to make sure it worked right. If a young lad lost his life over there it wasn't our fault because somebody may have shot him or he was blown out of the sky. Just like the Perfect Circle developing the aircraft ring for Allison. They had a lapping machine they developed that lapped this ring in just like wearing in your automobile so they could put this thing in and go The didn't have to break it down like they did in an automobile. Your dad and maybe some of the older people will remember that when you got a car and so many miles you drive it this speed, so many miles you drive it this speed, then you finally break the thing in. While this equipment was broke in when it was put in the cars. And even in the railroads, how fast they had built and developed the engines to pull trains with. Nobody will every comprehend this again, in history ever again. I don't think you'll ever see it again. Personally, I hope we won't have to do it again. I don't think you'll ever have the cooperation again that was given in that period of time in the American public. Because everybody's effort was towards one thing: Seeing our boys had everything they needed. I don't think they study it too much now.

Could you describe your feelings and what you were doing when you learned of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor?

"I couldn't believe what I had heard. I had just left my girlfriend's house and I had started toward home and people had started running out of their homes. First I thought, "What's the matter with these crazy people?" They were actually in a state of shock. Some were crying and screaming and I thought, what in the world. I had no way of knowing. Shortly after noon, give or take an hour, and I was just walking back home and they had told me what happened and you couldn't comprehend what happened to us. Really we didn't know the full effect and the full shock until later in the day when they started to talk about the casualties. It was a horrible feeling. You just couldn't imagine this happening. We had seen it in Europe and in the movie theater but it wasn't us. You had compassion for the people in England and France and Denmark and Holland and the Balkins where Germany had went in. Even when he attacked Russia, you had compassion for the people but it wasn't the feeling you had when it was us and right away you knew how those people felt because these were our boys. These are our states that they attacked, Hawaii. It wasn't a very good feeling."

Can you describe your feelings toward the dropping of the A-Bomb on Hiroshima?

"This was something that had to be done. I had no qualms against it. If we had to do it again, we should do it. This was a nation of people that needed to be taught a lesson the hard way. There was no compassion in these people whatsoever. They couldn't believe that this could happen to them and when this thing was dropped it woke these people up to the fact that they weren't the superior race they thought they were. No, I say it it had to be done again, do it. I have no qualms against it whatsoever."

How did you feel towards the end of World War 2?

"Really, I don't think that there are any words to describe it unless you were there. It was a feeling that you knew that everyone had worked for to see the ultimate end and it came when it was over with, there was great joy but some sorrow because some of the boys weren't coming back. You knew they weren't going to come home. Some of them would never be found, but it was a great moment of joy throughout the world. It was over and it was done with. Hopefully we will never have another one, although we've had conflict and we will have conflict, we can't stop this, but it was just a moment of joy you just can't forget. There's no way to describe it. It was over with. Peace was declared, it was just a mass celebration in all the towns and cities of the world. I hope you never have to go through it, but it was a good experience. I don't know how to put it into words. There was a lot of sorrow. I think a lot of people were sorrow with joy. They cried with joy as much as they did with sorrow. It was more joy than sorrow, but it had sorrow in it."

Describe any unique experiences on the home front that were memorable to you.

"I'm going to try to answer this in a way that...an experience. One of the worst experiences I had...I have to go through the time of the war. I told you I was a railroad engineer...I was coming out of Logansport...we had to wait that time for a factory train #200 to clear Kokomo so we could get clear out of Oakie Junction because that section of the railroad was an old 74 system and you had to wait and clear it from each tower, it wasn't like going down an automatic system where they just run you. You had signals that stopped you but I was running an M-type engine that was a passenger-type engine. I had 48 car loads of explosives. It was a cloudy, misty night, dark night. It was about one in the morning, kind of foggy. Through the war years they had track walkers and they would walk a section of track, maybe a mile this way and a mile that way, he had two miles he would cover. Well, from the time the #200 had cleared Kokomo, somebody had moved out a section of rail and by the time I had got the M-1 engine stopped, the Pony trucks, the lead pile of trucks on the engine, dropped off where there was no rail and if there were not any track walkers I would not be sitting here for this interview. There's no way because we would of made a nice big hole up there around Walton, Indiana. We would have blown a nice crater up there because we had 48 car loads of explosives and that is one of the most memorable experiences during the war, that man was doing his job and that goes back to what we were talking about. Everybody else was doing their effort to do their job during the war to help to see that everything went like it was supposed to go. It was all correlated: 1, 2, 3. If that man wasn't out there doing his job, I wouldn't be here telling this interview. One little man, not doing his job, could have caused a catastrophy. It was this way all over the country again. I think the most memorable part was how everybody worked together. We had a compassion for each other to see that you done your job while I did my job. It was just a memorable thing to remember how the American people pulled together and stayed together and we've been together for a long time and we done a good job and I have to say "we" because we all did it together and that is probably the most memorable things I remember. There were a lot of funny things, but that was probably one of the highlights I remember of how close I was to not being here. Oh, I could tell you one more incident that happened. You probably read about D-Day in your History books at that time of this happening we didn't know that D-Day was the day set as the day to invade Europe, it was around June 6, 1944, give or take a day there, but in March prior to that, they came from the railroad and got us for the railroad. Come to our homes, took us to the depot, the people that worked out of the Richmond Division. We lived in Richmond, Indiana, and we went to work and we worked 31 straight days without going home. Now what we done...no, now don't get excited...let me explain. We didn't work 31 straight days. We were on duty 31 straight days. We would take a train, like out of Logansport to Cincinnati. Then they would put us in a pullman car and put us to bed and feed us and put us up in the pullman car and we would go back to Logansport or go to Indy, pick another train up and take the train from Indy to Columbus, or maybe we'd get to Columbus and they would put us in a pullman car and we'd get our sleep and we'd take that train back from Columbus to Indy or from Columbus to Logansport. We worked 31 straight days. Well, at that, this happened we didn't know there was a planned invasion in Europe but when D-Day happened then we knew why we worked 31 straight days. Most of the railroads in this part of the country worked that. Everybody went on the time clock and after eight hours we went on time and a half and we stayed on for the thirty-one straight days. That was quite a memorable experience because my wife would, she would know, the trainmaster would call her in Richmond and tell her to meet me at the depot and give me a change of clean clothes and another suitcase and pick up my suitcase and that's how she knew when I was coming into Richmond. They would tell her and she would bring me down a change of clothes and some cosmetics to shave and clean up with and I just kept on going and I didn't go home for 31 straight days. That was another memorable experience that happened. Again, it was the effort to help end the war. The American public pulled together. No one complained, even our wives didn't complain. They went along with it.

They were a little disappointed at not having us at home but that's not what you thought of then. Even the people in the factories, when they went to work, they were on an 8 hour schedule but if the boss said work 16 hours, you stayed. Nobody argued about it. They stayed sixteen hours, worked seven days a week. That's just another one of those little memorable things that happened through the war years. There were many."

APPENDICES

Dear Participant:

Southside High School Honors United States History class is doing an oral history project funded by a grant from the Indiana Department of Education focusing upon World War 2. Your participation is essential for the student's successful conclusion of this project. The students will videotape an interview with you, and the tape will be transferred into a written form. From this written form, the class will compile and publish a book about the experiences of Muncie citizens during World War 2. The book will be given to local and state libraries.

This project will provide the students with a unique opportunity to experience United State History as well as meeting interesting people like yourself that have experienced this important era in American history. Your interview will also make an important and vital contribution to our community's collective memory of an interesting and exciting time period of American history.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carl R. Siler
Teacher, Honors History Class

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
SOUTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

I hereby release all rights, titles, or interest in and to all or any part of my tape recorded memoirs to Southside High School, and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by said Southside High School.

Place: Muncie, Indiana ________________________ (Interviewee)

Date: __________ ________________________ (Interviewer)

WORLD WAR 2
INTERVIEW SHEET
(MILITARY)

1. What is your name?
2. How old were you during World War 2?
3. In which branch of the service did you serve, and how long did you serve?
4. What was your rank?
5. What was your job during the war?
6. Where were you stationed during the war?
7. Were you involved in battle? If so, how did it affect you or what were your impressions of the battle?
8. Were you injured in battle? If so, can you describe your feelings?
9. If you were not in battle, describe the ways in which your job contributed to the war effort.
10. Describe what you remember most about World War 2.
11. Explain or describe the most rewarding experience that happened to you in the war.
12. At the time, what did you think you were fighting for? After 50 years, do you still feel the same way?
13. Describe your feelings when you heard that World War 2 was over.
14. Did the war experiences change your life? If so, describe in what ways.

Name of Interviewer ________________________ Date _________

WORLD WAR 2
INTERVIEW SHEET
(HOME FRONT)

1. What is your name?

2. How old were you during the war?

3. Describe what you did during the war.

4. If you worked, describe the ways your job benefitted the war effort.

5. Describe or explain how items were rationed.

   A. What were the rationing stamps?
   B. What type of stamps do you remember?
   C. Where did you get the stamps?
   D. How frequently did you receive the stamps?
   E. Describe the black marketing of the ration stamps.
   F. How was it determined how many stamps you received?

6. Describe your impression of the enemy during World War 2.

7. Explain how the war affected your family life.

8. Did you have any relatives in the war? Explain how their being in the war affected your life.

9. Describe the ways in which ordinary people supported the war effort.
   (i.e., recycling, victory gardens, civil defense, etc.)

10. Can you describe what you were doing and your feelings when you learned of the following:

    A. Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor
    B. Dropping of A-Bomb on Hiroshima
    C. End of World War 2

11. To what degree and for what reasons did you participate in the war bond drives?

12. Describe any unique experiences on the home front which were memorable to you.

Name of Interviewer ______________________ Date _________

INTERVIEW LOG SHEET

	NAME	MILITARY or HOME FRONT	DATE	RELEASE FORM
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

STUDENT'S NAME ______________________________

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